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THE RELIGION OF
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THE RELIGION OF
INDIA

THE SOCIOLOGY OF
HINDUISM AND BUDDHISM

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY

HANS H. GERTH AND DON MARTINDALE

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PART I
THE HINDU SOCIAL SYSTEM

CHAPTER I

INDIA AND HINDUISM

1. The General Place of Hinduism¹

INDIA, in contrast to China, has been, and remains, a land of villages and of the most inviolable organization by birth. But at the same time it was a land of trade, foreign, particularly with the Occident, as well as domestic. Trade and credit usury appeared in India from ancient Babylonian times. In the northwest Indian commerce was under constant perceptible Hellenic influence. At an early period the Jews settled in the South. Zarthustrians from Persia immigrated to the Northwest, constituting a stratum wholly devoted to wholesale trade. Into this situation came the influence of Islam and the rationalistic enlightenment of the great mogul Akbar. Under the great moguls, and also repeatedly before them, all or almost all of India for generations was formed into one political unit. Such periods of unity were interrupted, however, by long periods of disintegration with the country divided into numerous, constantly warring political dominions.

Princely methods of warfare, politics, and finance were rationalized, made subject to literary and, in the case of politics, even quite Machiavellian theorizing. Knightly combat and the disciplined army equipped by the prince appeared. While, as is occasionally maintained, use of artillery did not develop here for the first time, it appeared early. State creditors, tax farming, state contracting, trade and communication monopolies, etc., developed in the fashion characteristic of occidental patrimonial logic. For centuries urban development in India paralleled that of the Occident at many points. The contemporary rational number system, the technical basis of all "calculability," is of Indian

origin. The "positional" number system has existed for an undetermined time. The zero was invented and used sometime after the fifth or sixth century A.D. Arithmetic and algebra are considered to have been independently developed in India. For negative magnitudes the term "debts" (Ksaya) was used. In contrast to the Chinese, the Indians cultivated rational science (including mathematics and grammar). They developed numerous philosophic schools and religious sects of almost all possible sociological types. For the most part the schools and sects developed out of the basic need for rational consistency which was expressed in the most varied spheres of life. For long periods tolerance toward religious and philosophic doctrines was almost absolute; at least it was infinitely greater than anywhere in the Occident until most recent times.

Indian justice developed numerous forms which could have served capitalistic purposes as easily and well as corresponding institutions in our own medieval law. The autonomy of the merchant stratum in law-making was at least equivalent to that of our own medieval merchants. Indian handicrafts and occupational specialization were highly developed. From the standpoint of possible capitalistic development, the acquisitiveness of Indians of all strata left little to be desired and nowhere is to be found so little antichrematism and such high evaluation of wealth. Yet modern capitalism did not develop indigenously before or during the English rule. It was taken over as a finished artifact without autonomous beginnings. Here we shall inquire as to the manner in which Indian religion, as one factor among many, may have prevented capitalistic development (in the occidental sense).

The national form of Indian religion is Hinduism. The term "Hindu" was first used under the foreign domination of the Mohammedans to mean unconverted native Indians. Only in recent literature have the Indians themselves begun to designate their religious affiliation as Hinduism. It is the official designation of the English census for the religious complex also described in Germany as "Brahmanism." The term "Brahmanism" refers to the fact that a definite type of priest, the Brahman, was the leader of the religion. It is known that the Brahmans constituted a caste and that, in general, the institution of the castes—a system of particularly rigid and exclusive hereditary estates—played and continue to play a role in the social life of India.

Also, the names of the four main castes of classical Indian learning as represented in the *Law of Manu* are known: Brahmans (priest); Kshatriyas (knights); Vaishyas (free commoners); Shudras (serfs).^{*}

The general public is quite unfamiliar with the details of the castes with the possible exception of vague ideas about the transmigration of souls. These ideas are not false, they merely require clarification in terms of the abundant sources and literature.

Under the heading "religion" the tables of the *Census of India* for 1911 list, in round numbers, 217½ million people as "Hindus," i.e., 69.39 per cent of the population. Among the imported faiths there are: Mussulmen (66-2/3 million or 21.26 per cent); Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and "Animists" (10.29 million or 3.28 per cent). The following non-Hindu religions are listed as native to India: Sikhs² (around three million or 0.86 per cent); Jains (1.2 million or 0.40 per cent); Buddhists (10.7 million or 3.42 per cent). However, all but a third of a million of the Buddhists reside in Burma (which since early times was almost nine-tenths Buddhist); the remainder live in the bordering territories of Tibet (hence not on classically Indian but Mongolian territory), partly in outlying Indian territories, partly in central Asia.

To be sure, the census figures by decades cannot be compared without reservations. The percentage of Hindus since 1881 decreased from 74.32 per cent to 69.39 per cent; Islam rose from 19.74 per cent to 21.22 per cent; Christians, from 0.73 per cent to 1.24 per cent; and, finally, Animists, from 2.59 per cent to 3.28 per cent. This last figure, and also part of the percentage shifts, rests not only upon the considerable numbers of children of the uncultured animistic tribes but to a large extent upon differences in census enumeration. A further small part of the proportional decrease of Hindus is to be accounted for by the extension of the census to Burma, which resulted in a considerable increase in counted Buddhists. For the rest, the relative decline of the Hindu is partially to be attributed to differential birth and mortality rates. The relatively low social status and correspondingly low standard of living of the Hindu masses has, to some extent, religious causes. Child marriage, female infanti-

^{*} Translator's note: The spelling of caste names follows Jawaharlal Nehru's *The Discovery of India* (New York: John Day, 1946).

cide, the prohibition of the remarriage of widows, led to the reduction in the number of children and the high mortality of women of the upper castes; nutritional difficulties due to food taboos during bad harvest have been important among the lower strata.

Another small part of the decrease of Hindus is to be ascribed to single conversions to Islamism and Christianity, the converts being mainly from the lower castes for the betterment of their social situation. Formal conversions to Hinduism do not officially exist; according to the theory of Hinduism, they are impossible. This leads us forthwith to a consideration of important peculiarities of Hinduism.

A "sect" in the sociological sense of the word is an exclusive association of religious virtuosos or of especially qualified religious persons, recruited through individual admission after establishment of qualification. By contrast a "church," as a universalistic establishment for the salvation of the masses raises the claim, like the "state," that everyone, at least each child of a member, must belong by birth. It demands sacramental acts and, possibly, proof of acquaintance with its holy learning as a precondition of its membership rights, but establishes as a duty the observance of the sacraments and the discharge of those obligations which are a condition of active membership rights. The consequence of this is that when the church reaches its full development and has power, it coerces opponents to conform according to the principle *coge intrare*. The individual is normally "born" into the church, single conversions and admissions occurring only until the time the church has attained its principal goal—the unification of all men in the universal church. (Hinduism has some of the properties of a church conjoined to sect-like exclusiveness.)

One belongs to a strictly birth-religion, like Hinduism, merely by being born to Hindu parents. However, Hinduism is "exclusive" in the sense that in no other way can the individual enter its community, at least the circle of those considered fully qualified religiously. Hinduism does not wish to encompass mankind. No matter what his belief or way of life, anyone not born a Hindu remains an outsider, a barbarian to whom the sacred values of Hinduism are in principle denied.

Like most generalizations about Hinduism this is true only with qualifications. Quite apart from the sporadic relaxation of

the exclusiveness of the upper castes, as reported by the Census, there were important processes in some of the lower castes. Some of these castes not only recruit excommunicated former members of other castes but occasionally do so quite indiscriminately. For example, the impure caste of the Bhangi of Bombay Province is partially made up of *outcastes* from higher castes. However, the Bhangi of the "United Provinces" were recruited by admitting voluntary applicants, and hence were often identified, as Blunt does in the Census Report of 1911, with the Tshandala, the lowest unclean caste of the ancient law books. Several other castes, in principle, allow individuals to affiliate.

A great number of outcastes belong to the Vaishnabs, a sect-caste which to this day offers a haven to rebels against Brahmanical rule. Furthermore, imperfectly Hinduized tribes and tribal castes burdened with residues of tribal descent often receive individual affiliates. Most lenient are the very low-ranking pariah tribes of mat- and basket-weavers.

In general, the more completely Hinduized in the classical pattern, the more exclusive the caste. And genuine old Hindu castes hold that individual affiliation with a caste is impossible. Hence Ketkar³ goes too far in constructing the facts above into the generalization that Hinduism "leaves it" to the various castes whether or not to accept strangers and that no caste can lay down the law for another. Formally, each caste formulates its own principles, but in a typical Hindu caste the affiliating individual would forego all sib ties. In fact, rules, prerequisites, and forms of individual recruitment are nonexistent. Where individual affiliation takes place it is indicative of an absence rather than the existence of rules. In the systematic Hinduization of a region, at least according to ancient theory, the Hinduized barbarians could at best join the lowliest unclean caste of the Tshandala.

Occasionally, for instance in the *Manu-Bhashya*, II, 23, the question is raised as to when a conquered barbarian territory becomes suitable for sacrifice, i.e., "ritually pure"; the answer given is that it is ritually pure only when the king establishes the four castes and reduces the barbarians to Tshandala. Obviously, the other castes (including Shudra castes) can develop in a given place only by the immigration of Hindus of those castes. Vanamali Chakravanti⁴ maintains that the numerous Tshandala of the South Eastern regions originated from such

immigration. In any case the barbarian must, as it were, work up from the ranks (*von der Pike auf*) and can advance only by way of metempsychosis. That is not to say that the barbarian will always be considered socially inferior to the accepted impure caste. His social status depends upon his style of life.

The Census Report of 1901 states that tribes outside the caste system enjoy greater esteem than do the lower castes of impure village artisans precisely because they are not "conquered" subjects. If they were to affiliate with castes they would be received by the pure castes. This is obviously similar to the relative social estimation of Indians and Negroes in the United States. The higher esteem of the Indians is in the last analysis due to the fact that "they didn't submit to slavery." Therefore the American gentleman permits intermarriage and commensalism with Indians but never with Negroes. In areas where the caste system has not been shattered, a non-Hindu, a European, for instance, can find only members of impure castes for domestic service; the domestic servant of the ritually pure Hindu castes without exception belongs to and must belong to pure castes.

Thus, with some qualifications the principle holds that anyone not born a Hindu remains an outsider. And although, as has been indicated, there are "open-door castes" they are unclean. Ecclesiastical institutions of universal grace employ excommunication for certain sacrilegious offences, but only to the extent that the banned person foregoes churchly means of grace while remaining subject to ecclesiastical jurisdiction and sanction.

Hinduism, however, is exclusive—like a sect. For certain religious offences a person is forever excluded from the community. A Brahman caste, for instance, cancelled the re-admission of members after their forced conversion to Islamism. It did this despite their absolution by penance and purification when it became known that the applicants had been compelled to eat beef.

This case is comparable to that of the heroic sects of early Christendom, including the Montanists, who (because of Matthew, 10, 33), in contrast to the corporate church organization, deemed absolutely irreparable the participation of Christians in emperor worship. It was, for this very reason, that the Romans had made emperor worship compulsory during the time of the Diocletian persecutions.

Insofar as individual recruitment was possible, at least the

expelled Brahmans might have found a haven among one of the unclean castes of beef-eaters. But a man who has knowingly killed a cow could not possibly be accepted as a fellow-Hindu. To put it more precisely: the castes suspected, with good reason, of cooperating in cattle poisoning practices (especially the currier castes) are an abomination for every Hindu, even though these castes are officially correct.

2. Diffusion Patterns of Hinduism

HINDU propaganda in the grand manner occurred in the past. It is still of considerable importance. In the course of about eight hundred years the present Hindu system has spread from a small region in Northern India to an area comprising over 200 million people. This missionary propagation was accomplished in opposition to "animistic" folk belief and in conflict with highly developed salvation religions. The system is still expanding from census to census.

Ordinarily, the propagation of Hinduism occurs in approximately the following way. The ruling stratum of an "animistic" tribal territory begins to imitate specific Hindu customs in something like the following order: abstention from meat, particularly beef; the absolute refusal to butcher cows; total abstinence from intoxicating drinks. To these certain other specific purification practices of good Hindu castes may be added. The ruling stratum gives up marriage practices that may deviate from Hindu custom and organizes itself into exogamous sibs, forbidding the marriage of their daughters to men of socially inferior strata. The Brahmans, by the way, are often very tolerant with regard to marital customs. During the Hinduization of many a small region, for instance, existing matrilineal lines were left in peace. Moreover, some castes maintaining high standards have survivals of totemic organization, as will be shown. The same tolerance is shown for alcohol and food other than beef. In this respect individual members of genteel castes such as the Vishnuites and the Shivaists often differ more markedly than do the castes. The assumption of additional Hindu customs follows rapidly: restrictions are placed upon contact and table community; widows are forced into celibacy; daughters are given into marriage before puberty without being asked; the dead are cremated rather than buried; ancestral death sacrifices (*śraddha*)

are arranged; and native deities are rebaptized with the names of Hindu gods and goddesses. Finally, tribal priests are eliminated and some Brahman is requested to provide and take charge of ritual concerns and thereby also to convince himself and provide testimony to the fact that they—the rulers of the tribe—were of ancient, only temporarily forgotten, knightly (Kshatriya) blood. Or, under favorable circumstances, the tribal priests borrow the Brahman's way of life, acquire some knowledge of the Vedas, and maintain that they are themselves Brahmans of some special Veda school and members of an ancient well-known Brahman sib (*gotra*) going back to such and such sage (*Rishi*). Presumably it had only been forgotten that they had immigrated from an ancient Hindu region centuries ago. Now they seek to establish relations with recognized Indian Brahmans.

It is not always easy to find true Brahmans ready to accept such spurious propositions, and neither in the past nor nowadays would a high-caste Brahman accept them. However, numerous Brahman subcastes were and are still to be found. Some of recognized Brahman-quality are considered socially degraded because they serve lower castes, perhaps meat-eaters and wine-drinkers. They were and are ready to accept such propositions. Pedigree, and the required origin-myth, possibly reaching back to epic or pre-epic times, are borrowed or simply invented, documented, and witnessed, permitting the claim to the rank of Rajput (royal relationship, the present-day term for Kshatriya).

Fleet⁶ proved the frequent falsification of princely pedigrees in Southern India as early as the ninth century. Surviving irregularities in conduct are then eliminated, and a scanty Vedic education is required of the knights and of the stratum to be considered twice-born free men (*Vaishyas*). Assimilation is completed with the ceremony of girdling and binding themselves with holy ties. The ritual rights and duties of the various occupations are regulated in Hindu manner.

This accomplished, the ruling stratum seeks social intercourse on equal footing with equivalent strata in ancient Hindu territory. When possible they seek to attain intermarriage and commensalism with its Rajput sibs, acceptance of food cooked in water from Brahmans, admission of their own Brahmans to old Brahmanical schools and cloisters. But this is extremely difficult and as a rule does not initially succeed. A true, or today pre-

sumably true, Brahman or Rajput will listen sympathetically and with good humor to the origin legend of such an upstart Rajput stratum, if, for example, an interested European relates it. No true Brahman or Rajput would dream of treating the new fellows as his peers.

Alas, time and wealth make a difference. Large doweries to Rajputs who marry their daughters, and other means of exerting social pressure, are employed and there comes a time—today often relatively quickly—when the manner of origin is forgotten and social acceptance is completed. A certain residue of rank degradation usually remains the lasting burden of the parvenu.

There, in substance, is the typical way in which Hinduism has been extensively propagated in new territories since its full development.

This extensive propaganda was paralleled by an intensive propaganda which followed similar principles wherever Hinduism held sway.

As a social phenomenon "guest peoples"* existed everywhere within the Hindu community. They are to be found to this day. Contemporary remnants still evident among us are the gypsies, a typical ancient Indian guest people which, in contrast to others, has wandered outside of India. In earlier times similar phenomena occurred on a far larger scale in India. There, as elsewhere, the guest people does not primarily appear as an

* Weber's terms "guest" and "pariah" peoples refers to a series of groups in diverse constellations. The groups seem to be marked by the following typological extremes. (1) Peoples who as a result of invasion and conquest are expropriated from their lands by immigrant caste groups and reduced to economic dependence on the conqueror. From the standpoint of the conquerors such peoples are "guests" even though they are older settlers than the conquerors. As soon as the caste system is established the newcomers may begin to assimilate the "barbarians" (the original settlers) by assigning them to the lowest of the castes. (2) Peoples who have lost their home lands completely and turned into itinerant artisans and, like the Gypsies, live a dispersed migratory dependent existence.

Obviously both of these groups find themselves in situations which have come to be described as "marginal" by Stonequist. *Contemporary Social Theory* Ed. by Harry E. Barnes, Howard Becker, and Frances B. Becker, New York: D. Appleton Century, 1940, pp. 35 ff.

On occasion, following general usage, we employ the term "marginal trading peoples" for trading "guests." Weber's frequent comparative references to the Jains, the "Jews of the far East" and to the Jews of the occidental Middle Ages seems evidence for the soundness of this procedure.

absolutely homeless wandering people. More frequently the guest peoples are of tribes which still possess village settlements of their own, but dispose of the product of their household or tribal industry interlocally; or of tribes where the members may periodically lease their services interlocally as harvesters, day laborers, repair men, hired helpers; or, finally, of tribes which may traditionally monopolize interlocal trade in a special product.

The increase in population of wood and mountain barbarian tribes on one hand, and the increasing demand for labor in the developing culture areas on the other created, with increasing wealth, numerous lower or unclean services. When the local resident population declined to take them over, these occupations fell into the hands of alien workers of foreign origin who were permanently lodged in urban areas but retained their tribal affiliations. Guest industry became highly developed in a form resembling that of specialized communities. Certain highly skilled trades are found in the hands of men native to the region, but such men were viewed as outsiders by village peoples. They did not live in the village but on the outskirts—in German, on the *Wurth*; they shared no part in the rights of the villagers, but rather formed into interlocal organizations of their own which answered for them and had jurisdiction over them. In the village they had only guest rights, partially under religious, partially under princely guarantee. Such phenomena are also found outside of India.

Frequently, the representatives of a guest industry are excluded from intermarriage and commensalism, and therefore are held to be ritually "impure." When such ritual barriers against a guest people exist, we shall, for our present purposes, use the expression *pariah people*. As far as the Hindus are concerned, the term would be quite incorrect. The Pulyian or Parayan (pariah) caste of Southern India by no means represents the lowest stratum or a stratum of outcastes, as Abbe Raynal believes. A caste of ancient weavers (and today also farmhands), first mentioned in inscriptions of the eleventh century, they did not rank high socially and had to live outside the village, but they had, and have, fixed caste privileges. The leather-workers (Chamar) and streetsweepers ranked lower. And lower still are castes like the Doms and others who mainly represent the dregs of the castes.

We use the term pariah here in the usual European sense, much in the way the term Kadi is used in Kadi-justice. The term pariah people in this special sense should not be taken to refer to any tribe of workers considered by a local community "strange," "barbaric," or "magically impure" unless they are at the same time wholly or predominantly a guest people.

The purest form of this type is found when the people in question have totally lost their residential anchorage and hence are completely occupied economically in meeting demands of other settled peoples—the gypsies, for instance, or, in another manner, the Jews of the Middle Ages.

The fluid transition from the guest industry of settled tribes to a pariah people of this pure type is accomplished through numerous transitional steps. In Hindu territory a ritualistic barrier was, and is, established against all tribes not affiliated with the Hindu association. All such unaffiliated tribes are magically defiled. In every village may be found certain indispensable guest workers—for example, workers with cowhides and leather—who, despite their indispensability for a millenium have been absolutely impure. Their very presence may infect the air of a room and so defile food in it that it must be thrown away to prevent evil enchantment. According to his caste, ritualistic infection by a man of impure caste may even destroy the sexual potency of a Brahman. Hence they stand entirely outside the Hindu association. No Hindu temple is open to them.

The power of such circumstances is alone great enough to force a long series of transitional adjustments toward full integration into the social order. First, there were and are numerous degrees of segregation. While impure guest workers have been excluded since ancient times from the village association, they are not thereby made outlaws. The village owes them a definite compensation for their services and reserves for them a monopoly in their respective vocations. Moreover, their regulated ritualistic rights and duties by their very gradations denote a positively defined legal position. Even when Brahmans and members of other high castes may have to avoid contact with them or even their very presence, the positive religious rules of Hinduism are decisive for the nature of these relations. Above all, a violation of these norms by the impure guest worker results not only in the measures taken by the Brahmans or village community, but also, under certain circumstances, by his own community. Be-

sides, it is a source of magical disadvantage in this world, and reduction of salvation chances in the next.

One must ascribe membership in the Hindu community to those impure guest workers and pariah peoples who adhere to such norms and regulations despite their essentially underprivileged status position. Indubitably, they have been considered members for centuries, inasmuch as they do not represent barbarian tribes but impure castes in Hindu classification.

Quite different is the case of those tribes, whose guest position is defined by traditional rules, applying to those trafficking with alien overseas traders. Such tribes have neither positive nor negative religious rank, but are considered to be simply impure barbarians. They recognize no religious duties of a Hindu sort. They not only have their own deities but, what is more important, their own priests; although both of these situations occur also among Hindu castes, the "barbarians" simply ignore the institutions of Hinduism. Such tribes are as little Hindu as the Christians and Mussulmen.

There are, however, various transitional stages on the way to Hinduization. As Blunt observes in the Census report, a considerable section of the people listed in the census as "Animists" consider themselves Hindus. However, some of the people listed in the Census as impure castes are under certain circumstances inclined to reject all relation to Hinduism, particularly to the Brahmans. In fighting for the significance of their national culture today, the representatives of Hinduism seek to define Hinduism as broadly as possible. They claim as a Hindu anyone who passes one of the possible tests of Hinduism defined by census authority, hence also a Jain, Sikh, or Animist. In extending their definition of Hinduism, the Hindus are met halfway by the tendency toward Hinduization among these outsiders.

This tendency among guest tribes living among Hindus takes roughly the following form: its guest workers readily begin to claim and accept certain services from those Brahmans who regularly serve impure castes, e.g., the casting of the horoscope for marriage dates and similar family activities, while continuing to call upon their own priests for other services. If such guest workers take up trades of Hindu castes, usually impure, they must conform to prescriptions applied elsewhere to that trade in order to avoid too sharp resistance. The more they approach the pure type of a pariah people—i.e., the more they lose their

stability in a closed tribal territory, or the less important this becomes—the more their social situation depends upon the norms their Hindu environment establishes, the more likely they are to adjust their ritualistic conduct to it, and the more they borrow typical Hindu customs and find themselves in the end essentially in the position of a (usually impure) Hindu caste.

The sole caste designation by pariah peoples monopolizing ancient crafts or trades is the old tribal name. Sometimes when the tribe forms an additional endogamous caste division of an old Hindu caste the tribal name is continued beside the caste name. This tribal name is then the last residue of their origin.

Most varied transitional states of Hinduization, i.e., the transformation of tribes into castes, are to be found. Sometimes assimilation takes a mixed form, partially extensive, partially intensive propaganda; sometimes subdivisions of a tribe are received as a guest people by several castes, while the remaining subdivisions continue to exist without losing their form of tribal organization. The Ahir represent a mixed Hinduized tribe originally of shepherds and herdsmen. In Bombay Province even today (1911) some castes have subcastes of Ahirs in addition to their usual ones. Thus the Brahmans in Khandesh have the Sonars, the Lohars, and the Koli. There, as elsewhere, the Ahir carpenters, goldsmiths, and blacksmiths do not intermarry with the professionally identical non-Ahir castes, whereas Ahir carpenters and Ahir blacksmiths, though of different castes, often do intermarry. Moreover, Ahirs who remained herdsmen often are totemically organized like a tribe, and not by sibs like a caste. On the other hand, in some castes the Ahir have disappeared completely as subcastes or have never existed as subcastes. (An inscription⁶ mentions a prince of Jodhpur who had chased the tribe of the Ahir out of a village and established the caste order at the place.) We shall not pursue this typology—enough has been given to indicate how fluid are the boundaries of Hinduism.

Usually the propaganda advances in the form of a slow-moving recruitment of whole associations into the Hindu community. In principle, at least, it cannot be otherwise, since individuals can never affiliate directly with that community except as members of another association, a caste; and since affiliation always takes place in terms of the fiction that the respective association had been a caste of yore, somewhat similar to a Catholic dogma

which is never newly enacted like a modern law, but is rather "found" and "defined" as having always been valid. It is in this way that the hereditary character of Hindu religion is revealed.

What were, and are, the motives working for the reception? The Brahmins, serving as intermediaries, primarily have material interest in opportunities for expanding income, ranging from service fees for the casting of horoscopes to prebends and the gifts due to house and sacrificial priests. Rich gifts of cattle, money, jewelry, and, above all, land and land rent (pepper-rent) were the compensations for Brahmins who provided the necessary "proofs" of genteel descent for the Hinduized ruling stratum of an area undergoing assimilation.

And what were the motives of the group desiring assimilation? The "tribes" which would be transformed into "castes," particularly their ruling stratum, assume an enslaving yoke of rituals hardly duplicated elsewhere in the world. They surrendered pleasures—for instance, alcohol, which is relinquished in general only with great reluctance. What, then, was the reason?

Legitimation by a recognized religion has always been decisive for an alliance between politically and socially dominant classes and the priesthood. Integration into the Hindu community provided such religious legitimation for the ruling stratum. It not only endowed the ruling stratum of the barbarians with recognized rank in the cultural world of Hinduism, but, through their transformation into castes, secured their superiority over the subject classes with an efficiency unsurpassed by any other religion. In the distant past, the services of the Brahmins were not, as a rule, sought primarily and exclusively by nobles; nor were the nobles always the only stratum seeking Hinduization, as assumed above in accordance with nineteenth-century conditions. On occasion the nobles were probably direct opponents of the Brahmins.

In ancient times it was the kings, rather, who took the lead in the struggle for Hinduization. As the Slavic princes of the East called into their lands German priests, knights, merchants, and peasants, so the kings of the East Ganges Plain and of Southern India from the Tamils to the southern tip called upon Brahmins trained in writing and administration. Their services were enlisted to assist the prince in the formal organization, in the Hindu manner, of his patrimonial bureaucratic rule and status structure

and to consecrate the prince as a legitimate Raja or Maharaja in the sense of the Hindu Dharmashastras, Brahmanas, and Puranas. Telling documents of land-grants issued sometimes simultaneously to dozens, even hundreds of obviously immigrant Brahmans, are found dispersed throughout India.

Similar to the legitimation interest of the ruling groups are the interests lying back of the voluntary acceptance of Hindu rites by pariah peoples who, by this means, only acquire the humiliating situation of an impure caste. Yet, from the standpoint of Hinduism, they are impure anyway, and obliged by restrictions to keep their place. Hence it is advantageous to secure a monopoly over their work opportunities by recognizing them as a legitimate "caste," however underprivileged, rather than an alien people. Also by borrowing organizations peculiar to Hinduism (e.g., the caste *panchayat*, to be discussed later) the assumption of caste status can be given practical significance.

These caste organizations, like quasi-trade unions, facilitate the legitimate defense of both internal and external interests of the lower castes. To be sure, substitutes might well be found for these organizations. Perhaps, too, in the past, religious hopes were frequently an important factor in the Hinduization of such pariah peoples, for, as we shall see, Hinduism holds out hopes to the socially oppressed strata. The peculiarities of the religious promise which Hinduism offers to underprivileged classes help explain their relatively minor resistance in view of what one would expect of the abysmal distance Hinduism establishes between social strata.

Certainly there are, and were, rebellions against the Hindu order rising from the impure castes. Certain specifically proletarian prophecies hostile to the Brahmans will be discussed in Part II. There are today a number of communities which expressly deny all Brahmanical authority. If, in any external respects, such communities behave as castes, official Hindu and the former British census authorities are inclined to treat them as castes, in spite of the dubious status of the communities or their will in the matter. Rebellions by lower castes undoubtedly occurred. The question is: Why were there not more of them, and, more important, why did the great, historically significant, religious revolutions against the Hindu order stem from altogether different, relatively privileged strata and retain their roots in these?

The approximately correct view may be formulated provisionally: the internalization of the Hindu order by underprivileged strata, guest and pariah tribes, represents the adjustment of socially weak strata to the given caste order—the legitimation of their social and economic situation. However, the struggle for or against acceptance of Hinduism for entire territories generally was led by the rulers or ruling strata. In any case, the strongest motive for the assimilation of Hinduism was undoubtedly the desire for legitimation.

Hinduism was an almost irresistible social force. For centuries two salvation religions expressly hostile to the Brahmans—Jainism and to a greater extent, Buddhism—have contended with Hinduism throughout the Indian culture area. In no way universally predominant, they were officially established confessions. They have been completely defeated through the restoration of Hinduism—so completely that in 1911 the Jains comprised only .40 per cent of the population (in 1891 they were still .49 per cent, in 1901, .45 per cent and, indeed, most of these remained only in a few cities of west India.

That the decrease is due exclusively to the greater mortality of the urban population, as stated in the Census of 1911, may well be questioned. During 1881-91 there was a relative increase from .45 to .49. On the whole, the urban Jains have a lower mortality rate than have the urban Hindus. Of the ancient national Buddhist church, only in Orissa, does a community (of around 2,000 persons) remain. Other Buddhists enumerated elsewhere in India are immigrants.

Truly sanguine persecutions of these heterodoxies were indeed not lacking during the Hindu restoration, but they obviously do not account for the unusually quick victory of Hinduism. Favorable political circumstances contributed to the victory. Decisive, however, was the fact that Hinduism could provide an incomparable religious support for the legitimation interest of the ruling strata as determined by the social conditions of India. The salvation religions, as we shall see, were unable to supply such support. A further striking phenomenon is in agreement with this.

We have observed the momentum of the caste system in its diffusion through the assimilation of tribes. Once established, the assimilative power of Hinduism is so great that it tends even to integrate social forms considered beyond its religious borders.

Thus religious movements of expressly anti-Brahmanical and anti-caste character, that is, contrary to one of the fundamentals of Hinduism, have been in all essentials returned to caste order.

The process is not hard to explain. When a principled anti-caste sect recruits former members of various Hindu castes and tears them from the context of their former ritualistic duties, the caste responds by excommunicating all the sect's proselytes. Unless the sect is able to abolish the caste system altogether instead of simply tearing away some of its members, it becomes, from the standpoint of the caste system, a quasi-guest folk, a kind of confessional guest community in an ambiguous position in the prevailing Hindu order. Further definition of the situation by the remaining Hindus depends upon the style of life elaborated in the new community. If the sect permitted a way of life Hinduism considers ritually defiling (beef consumption), the Hindus treat it as a pariah people, and if this condition continues long enough, as an impure caste. We have already noted the fluidity of such transitions. If ritualistic defilement is not indicated, in time (particularly if the activities of the sect members are of a ritualistic nature—and such is usually the case), the sect may take its place among the surrounding castes as one with special ritualistic duties.

The sect developing into a caste needs only to be interested in securing its social rank over and against other castes. There is no obstacle to this; indeed, there are Hindu castes which repudiate the Brahmans for their own priests. In the course of time the sect can be recognized either as a single caste (sect-caste) or as a caste with subcastes of different social rank. This last occurs when the sect members are socially quite heterogeneous. Finally, development can follow the pattern described as tribal assimilation to the Hindu order. The upper strata of the sect become priests, landlords, merchants seeking recognition as Brahmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas, but the remaining plebs become one or more Shudra castes—in order to share the social and economic privileges of the upper castes of their Hindu surroundings.

At the present time the ancient sect of the Lingayat is going through this development. Originally, in the Middle Ages, it represented a type of particularly sharp and principled "protestant" reaction to the Brahmans and the caste order. From census to census it has come to conform more and more to the

Hindu order, and it now demands the registration of its members according to the four classical Hindu castes. For some time the Lingayat sect has undergone a characteristic process of status differentiation suggestive of the gentility claimed by the descendants of the Mayflower Pilgrims in New England. The descendants of the first converts considered themselves more genteel and highly privileged than the latter proselytes.

The members of the Jain congregations, which today frequently intermarry with certain (merchant) castes, are occasionally considered Hindus by Hinduists.

Buddhism, in principle, had not infringed upon the caste order. Its monks, as we shall see, were and are thought to be out-and-out heretics, and they themselves claim to be non-Hindus. That did not, however, prevent isolated Buddhistic communities on the North Indian border from acquiring a peculiar caste stratification after the monasteries had become secularized into prebends.

Islam, too, succumbed in India to the engulfing tendency toward caste formation. In this case, caste formation could be linked to the typical status stratification of classical Islam. The actual or alleged descendants of the prophet and certain families religiously ranking close to his sib (the Sayyid or Sherif) had privileged status. Likewise, status stratification developed after indiscriminate propaganda had been halted for financial reasons and the ancient privilege exempting old believers from taxation had been denied to new converts, thus posing one group against the other. In India, this meant the setting of the Middle Eastern and Persian immigrants against Indian proselytes. Finally, and appropriate to the feudal character of ancient Islamic society, the sibs of the landlords stood opposed to the sibless peasants and, above all, to the craftsmen. These differences with their respective variations determined the form Islamic castes developed in India.

We are not here concerned with the fact that numerous Hindu castes worship Islamic saints alongside Hindu deities, that mixed formations like the sect of the Sikhs developed, and that Indian Islam also borrowed numerous Hindu rituals. What interests us here is the assimilative power of the Hindu life order due to its legitimation of social rank and, not to be forgotten, possible related economic advantages.

The central significance of the Hindu social order is expressed

primarily in the interrelation of the doctrinal and ritualistic-ethical aspects of the religion.

3. *Hindu Doctrine and Ritual*

LIKE Confucianism, Hinduism knows the dualism of "doctrine" and "ritualistic duty." A distinction is made in Hindu terminology⁷ between *Dharma* and *Mata*. *Mata* refers to metaphysical theology. To Christian doctrine (*Kristi-mata*), for example, belong such ideas as the following: that all (and only) men have "souls"; that a supramundane being created the world and all souls out of nothing; that each soul lives but once on the earth and is nevertheless immortal; that after life on earth, the soul must spend its eternal life in heaven or hell; that God produced through a virgin a God-incarnate son whose deeds and accomplishments are significant for man's salvation.

That schism occurs in the interpretation of special elements of Christian doctrine is no surprise to the Hindu. He is familiar with such differences through the sharp doctrinal cleavages of his philosophic schools and sects. Among the Brahmans, some Vishnu and Shiva sects would not even utter the names of each other's Gods.

Again, a Hindu is not disturbed by the fact that there are certain teachings one must accept to be a Christian—(although some Hindus may deny it, the same phenomena appears in Hinduism)--while other controversial teachings may be freely discussed in one and the same church of as strict doctrinal authority as the Catholic.

Precisely this freedom of opinion obtains in Hinduism to an exceptional degree—so much so that the concept of "dogma" is entirely lacking. Without becoming a non-Hindu, a Hindu could accept highly important and most characteristic doctrines which every denominational Christian would consider exclusively his own. For example, he could accept the whole Christology and its elaborations, which, in fact, deeply influenced the development of Vishnuite Krishna mythology. Also, the Hindu could accept the doctrine of justification through faith, a belief which also existed in Hinduism among the Bhagavat sects long before Christ.

More important from the Hindu standpoint are other elements, or rather pre-suppositions of Christian teaching, which

for the Hindus, make it a doctrine of barbarians (*mlechha-mata*) as it was for Hellenic man. These differences could also cause Christology and the doctrine of justification to change their meaning radically when taken into Hinduism. First, it would be necessary to renounce the claim of Christian doctrines to universal validity. In Hinduism a teaching may be orthodox without being bindingly valid, a situation illustrated in the doctrinal differences in the interpretation of the Last Supper by the Reformed Church and the Lutherans when they united in an evangelical established church. And, indeed, the doctrinal fluidity of Hinduism is not incidental but, rather, the central issue of "religion" as we conceive it. According to Christian concepts, the promise of transcendent values is the primary reason for belonging to a "religion." Moreover, in raising the issue of transcendent ends is posed the problem of the "path of salvation" (*marga*), the means by which the holy object is attainable by men.

Disregarding the sacred, but "this-worldly" values represented by Hinduism, and considering it as a unit, Hinduism offers a choice of three apparently exclusive holy ends in the beyond. (1) Rebirth to a new temporary life on earth in circumstances at least as fortunate as the present ones; or, what, in contrast to the Christian, is for the Hindu in the same category, rebirth in a paradise (a) in the world of God (*salokya*), or (b) near to God (*samipya*), or (c) as an apotheosized God (*sarupya*). Rebirth in paradise occurs with the same provisions as earthly rebirth; it is for a limited time followed by another rebirth. (2) A second possible holy object is unlimited admission to the blissful presence of a supramundane God (Vishnu), hence immortality of the individual soul in one of the three forms listed above. (3) The third holy object is the cessation of individual existence and (a) mergence of the soul in the all-one (*sayujya*), or (b) submergence in *nirvana*; the nature of this latter state is in part variously explained and in part left obscure.

All three forms of the sacred ends are orthodox, although the third (to be precise: 3a) is specifically Brahmanical. It is preferred by the most distinguished Brahman sect of the Smartras. Indeed, by these circles the immortality doctrine is regarded as "unclassical" though not anti-Hindu, somewhat as the Taoistic doctrine is by the Confucians and the Pietist doctrine of grace by classical Lutherans. At any rate, the classical Hindu has a choice between the first and third goals of holy endeavor.

According to which teaching the Hindu follows, the paths leading to each of the three sacred ends differ radically. Asceticism, contemplation, works considered ritualistically pure, good works in the sense of social accomplishment (particularly professional virtues), enthusiastic faith (*bhakti*), are cumulative, alternative, or exclusive means to holy ends, according to the end sought. Nor is the view lacking in classical literature (the Mahabharata) that the individual secures for himself the kind of sacred value epitomized by the deity in whom he has faith and with whom he seeks refuge. Thus, the conception that "to you may happen, as you believed" is taken in its most daring sense.

Broader religious tolerance than this in a single religion is hardly conceivable. In truth, it may well be concluded that Hinduism is simply not a "religion" in our sense of the word. This is exactly what some of its representatives (Ketkar among others) emphatically affirm. What the Occidental conceives as "religion" is closer to the Hindu concept *sampradaya*. By this the Hindu understands communities into which one is not born—hence "open-door castes"—but to which one belongs by virtue of common religious aspiration and common sacred paths. Hindu scholars call such communities *theophratries*. Among the *theophratries* in India are Jainism, Buddhism, some of the revivals of Vishnu faith in a redeemer, and the Shiva sect of Lingayat, all of which, insofar as they retain their essential beliefs and practices, were and are considered absolutely heretical. This is the case even though Buddhism, for example, does not doubt the existence and power of Hindu gods and the theophratic Vishnu sect; and the Lingayat worships each one of the great gods of the Hindu triad (Brahman, Vishnu, Shiva). These communities are, furthermore, regarded as heretical, even though, at least from our standpoint and for the most part from that of Hinduism, there is no basic difference between their particular sacred values and paths and those of orthodox Hinduism. At least they are far less divergent than the widely different paths of salvation admittedly orthodox. In contrast to Hinduism all these theophratries receive individuals into their fellowships. But even this is not decisively heretical.

Nor does affiliation with a sect bring about excommunication. As indicated by the later parts of the epics and *puranas*, from its beginning specific Hindu religiosity has accepted the appearance of sects as completely normal. In fact, the truly devout

Hindu is not merely a Hindu but a member of a Hindu sect as well. And it may even happen that while the father is a Shivaist the son may be a Vishnuist.⁸ In practice, this means that one of them was instructed by the *directeur de l'âme* (the *guru*) of the Shiva sect, the other by one of the Vishnu sect. After completion of his instruction one was received into sect membership by being informed of the sect's *mantra*, i.e., its slogan-like prayer-formula. He bears the symbols of the sect (forehead marking, etc.), frequents its temples, and, finally, prays exclusively and directly to Vishnu or Shiva, as the case may be, or to one of their incarnations. (He considers the other two deities of the triad as mere aspects of his own God.) He observes both the general rites of his caste and the special rites of his sect, as is orthodox Hindu practice.

In contrast to the orthodox sects, the heresy of the theophra-tries consists in the fact that they tear the individual away from his ritualistic duties, hence from the duties of the caste of his birth, and thus ignore or destroy his *dharma*. When this occurs the Hindu loses caste. And since only through caste can one belong to the Hindu community, he is lost to it. *Dharma*, that is, ritualistic duty, is the central criterion of Hinduism.

Hinduism is primarily ritualism, a fact implied when modern authors state that *mata* (doctrine) and *marga* (holy end) are transitory and "ephemeral"—they mean freely elected—while *dharma* is "eternal"—that is, unconditionally valid.

The first question a Hindu asks of a strange religion is not what is its teaching (*mata*) but its *dharma*. The Christian *dharma* of a Protestant is, for the Hindu, something positive in baptism, communion, church attendance, rest on Sunday and other Christian festivals, the table prayer. These observances would be acceptable to the members of all good Hindu castes with the exception of communion. When administered in either of its forms communion requires the drinking of alcohol, and compulsory table community with noncaste fellow-Christians. Moreover, the negative aspects of the Christian *dharma*—that, for example, it permits Christians to eat meat, particularly beef, and drink hard liquor—stamp it as the *dharma* of impure barbarians (*mlechha dharma*).

What, then, is the content of *dharma* to a Hindu? We learn that *dharma* differs according to social position and, since it is subject to "evolution," which is not absolutely closed and com-

pleted, *dharma* depends upon the caste into which the individual is born. With the split of old into new castes *dharma* is specialized. Through the advance of knowledge *dharma* can be further developed.

The conservative circles of Hinduism would, of course, accept this characterization unreservedly only for the remote past—that age (in India the Kali-age) of prophetic inspiration which every priest-controlled religion (including Judaism, Christianity, and Islamism) must consider as ended in order to secure itself against innovation. In any case, *dharma* can be developed, like the divine commandments of a denominational religion, by “finding” thus far unknown, but eternally valid consequences and truths. This “discovery” comes about primarily through the adjudication and binding preceptual responses of competent authorities. The Brahmins find such authorities in the *Castris* and *Pandits*—scholars in sacred law, educated in Brahmanical schools and Brahmanical institutions of higher learning, the holy seat of Shringeri (for the South) or Shri Sankaraharya of Sankeshwar (for the North and Northwest). Among the authorities were Brahmanical monastic superiors whose position may be roughly compared to that of the superiors of the Carragheen (southern Ireland) monasteries in the time of their organization.

The other castes were subject to the jurisdiction of their caste institutions which, formerly more than today, depended in problematical cases upon the verdict of the Brahmins. *Dharma* depends first on sacred tradition, the adjudication, the literary and rationally developed learning of the Brahmins. Just as in Islamism, Judaism, and early Christianity, there is no “infallible” doctrinal authority of definite priestly office because the Brahmins represent no hierarchy of officials. The everyday *dharma* of the caste derives its content, in large measure, from the distant past with its taboos, magical norms, and witchcraft. Hindu *dharma*, however, is more extensively and in practice more significantly an exclusive product of the priesthood and its literature than the present-day ritualistic commandments of the Catholic Church. This fact has had important consequences for Hinduism.

4. *The Place of the Vedas*

OFFICIALLY, Hinduism, like the other book religions, has a

holy book—the Vedas. Here we wish to understand by Vedas only the collections of hymns, prayers, formulae. In a broader sense all “sacred” Hindu books, including the Brahmanas and Upanishads and the Transitional Sutras, are counted among the Vedas. One of the few essentially binding duties of Hindu “faith” is not—at least not directly—to dispute their authority. In the traditional view, any sect which, like the Jains and Buddhists, does not recognize their authority cannot be a Hindu sect. While at present this is not universally held, it is without question the normal view. But what does recognition of the authority of the Vedas—this collection of songs and hymns, ritualistic and magical formulas of varying age (some 600 years old, some 2,000)—what, in fact, does it mean?

The major constituent parts of the Vedas (rooted in the specialized functions of the Vedic priests during sacrifice) were originally orally transmitted. After their transcription by different schools of Brahmanas they continued in accordance with ancient correct practice to be withheld, from non-Brahman readers, as the Bible is withheld from the laity in the Catholic Church. Brahmanas were able to impart knowledge of only certain sections of the Vedas, and that only to laymen of the highest castes.

This secrecy was not due solely to the monopolization of magical formulae, a practice originally characteristic of all priests. Such secrecy had even more compelling objective reasons than those applying to the Vulgata after the strengthened position of the Brahmanas made magical monopolization superfluous. One is tempted to think of the Occident. The New Testament contained passages of an ethical substance which first had to be explained away by priestly interpretation (and thus in part turned into their exact opposite) before they were suitable for the purposes of a mass church in general and a priestly organization in particular. This was no problem for the Vedas, for they do not contain a rational “ethic.” The ethical world of the Vedas is simply that of all heroic ages, as expressed by singers dependent upon gifts from kings and heroes—singers who did not fail to emphasize their own powers and the powers of the gods they might magically influence.

The tenacity with which the Vedas retained this primitive character is to be explained by the fact that the hymns and particularly the prayer-formulae were believed to be magically proven and they were, therefore, sacerdotally stereotyped. This

preserved them from the kind of expurgation to which equivalent ancient Chinese literature was subjected by Confucius (and perhaps others) and the historical and cosmological Hebraic literature by the priesthood.

In consequence, the Vedas contain nothing about the divine and human affairs fundamental to Hinduism. The three great gods of Hinduism, even their names, are hardly mentioned. The Vedas have nothing to say about the specific character the Hindu gods acquired later. The gods of the Vedas are functional and hero gods, externally similar to those of Homer. The Vedic hero is a castle-dwelling, chariotearing warrior-king with a war band of Homeric type and with a similar accompaniment of predominantly cattle-breeding yeomen.

The great Vedic gods, especially the two greatest in their opposed characteristics are Indra and Varuna. Indra, the god of the thunderstorm, was (like Jahveh) a passionately active war and hero god, and, thereby god of the irrational fate of heroes. Varuna was the wise, omniscient, functional god of eternal order, particularly legal order. Both these gods have almost disappeared from Hinduism. No cults are built around them. They lead a purely historical life by grace of Vedic scholars. We could hardly expect more, however, considering the instability of the numerous Hindu deities and considering the practice which Max Müller called "henotheism," i.e., the practice, used even by the ancient singers, of referring to the god appealed to as the mightiest or only god in order to win his favor.

The Vedas rather defy the *dharma* of Hinduism. To a Christian, the official recognition of the Vedas might appear to be a "formal principle" of Hinduism in the manner of the Protestant recognition of the Bible—always with the reservation that it is at least not absolutely indispensable. With similar reservations the sacredness of the cow, and hence the absolute prohibition against killing cows, if anything, might be considered among the ritualistic "substantive principles" of Hinduism forming part of universal Hindu *dharma*. Whoever does not accept them as binding is not a Hindu.

The worship of the cow (and to a less degree the veneration of cattle generally) had extensive economic and ritualistic implications. Even today rational animal husbandry fails because, in principle, the animals must not die an unnatural death and hence are fed although their use value is long gone. (The ritual-

istically illegal poisoning of cattle by outcastes provides some remedy.) Cow manure and cow urine are believed to be purifying. To this day a correct Hindu who has dined with a European will disinfect himself (and perhaps fumigate his residence) by use of cow manure. No correct Hindu will bypass a urinating cow without putting his hand into the stream and wetting his forehead, garments, etc. with it as does the Catholic with holy water. During a poor harvest heroic economy serves first to provide fodder for the cow.

A beef-eater is either barbarian or low caste. The source of these Hindu conceptions is of no concern to us here; the point is the Vedas supply no evidence for such attitudes toward cattle and take beef-consumption for granted. In their attempt to explain this, Hindu "modernists" maintain that the contemporary (Kali) age is so wicked that the liberty of the golden age in this respect could no longer be granted. Moreover, if we look beyond the ritualistic prescriptions to the structured core of Hindu ideas, we fail to discover in the Vedas a single trace of such fundamental conceptions as the transmigration of souls and the derived *karma*-doctrine (of compensation). These ideas can only be interpretively read into some ambiguous and undatable passages of the Vedas.

Vedic religion knows only of a Hades, Yama's realm, and a Heaven of the Gods essentially comparable to the "kingdom of the fathers" in Homeric and Germanic antiquity. Neither the special heaven of the Brahmins nor the somewhat Christian or Olympian heaven of Vishnu or Shiva are to be found in the Vedas not to mention the "wheel" of rebirths and *nirvana*. Vedic religion affirms not only life and its values in the sense in which the later mass religion of Hinduism became life-affirmative in contrast to virtuoso-religion, but it addressed itself to things of this world as did similar religions which grew out of half-charismatic, half-feudal warrior and booty communities.

Obviously, the Vedas might possibly yield information concerning the pre-history of Hinduism, but they are not a source of insight into its content and its earliest historical forms. The Veda is a sacred book for Hinduism in about the way Deuteronomy is for Christianity. To acknowledge the authority of the Vedas, as demanded of the Hindu, means *fides implicita* in a more fundamental sense than that of the Catholic Church, and precisely because no savior is mentioned whose revelation could have substituted new law for old.

In practice, this means simply the acknowledgment of the authority of Hindu tradition resting on the Veda and the continued interpretation of its world image; it means acknowledgment of the rank station of its leaders, the Brahmins. The Vedas contain only incipient and preliminary steps of the later development and classic form of Hinduism.

5. The Brahmins and the Castes

IN CLASSICAL Hindu times as well as today, the position of the Brahmin can be understood only in connection with caste; without an understanding of this it is quite impossible to understand Hinduism. Perhaps the most important gap in the ancient Veda is its lack of any reference to caste. The Veda refers to the four later caste names in only one place, which is considered a very late passage; nowhere does it refer to the substantive content of the caste order with the meaning it later assumed and which is characteristic only of Hinduism.⁹

Caste, that is, the ritual rights and duties it gives and imposes, and the position of the Brahmins, is the fundamental institution of Hinduism. Before everything else, without caste there is no Hindu. But the position of the Hindu with regard to the authority of the Brahmin may vary extraordinarily, from unconditional submission to the contesting of his authority. Some castes do contest the authority of the Brahmin, but in practice, this means merely that the Brahmin is disdainfully rejected as a priest, that his judgment in controversial questions of ritual is not recognized as authoritative, and that his advice is never sought. Upon first sight, this seems to contradict the fact that "castes" and "Brahmins" belong together in Hinduism. But as a matter of fact, if the caste is absolutely essential for each Hindu, the reverse, at least nowadays, does not hold, namely, that every caste be a Hindu caste. There are also castes among the Mohammedans of India, taken over from the Hindus. And castes are also found among the Buddhists. Even the Indian Christians have not quite been able to withhold themselves from practical recognition of the castes. These non-Hindu castes have lacked the tremendous emphasis that the Hindu doctrine of salvation placed upon the caste, as we shall see later, and they have lacked a further characteristic, namely, the determination of the social rank of the castes by the social distance from other Hindu castes, and therewith, ultimately, from the Brahmin. This is decisive

for the connection between Hindu castes and the Brahman; however intensely a Hindu caste may reject him as a priest, as a doctrinal and ritual authority, and in every other respect, the objective situation remains inescapable; in the last analysis, a rank position is determined by the nature of its positive or negative relation to the Brahman.

"Caste" is, and remains essentially social rank, and the central position of the Brahmans in Hinduism rests primarily upon the fact that social rank is determined with reference to Brahmans. In order to understand this, we shall turn to the present condition of the Hindu castes, as described in the excellent scientific Census Reports. We shall also consider briefly the classical theories of caste contained in the ancient books of law and other sources.

Today the Hindu caste order is profoundly shaken. Especially in the district of Calcutta, old Europe's major gateway to India, many norms have practically lost their force. The railroads, the taverns, the changing occupational stratification, the concentration of labor through imported industry, colleges, etc., have all contributed their part. The "commuters to London," that is, those who studied in Europe and maintained voluntary social intercourse with Europeans, were outcasts up to the last generation; but more and more this pattern is disappearing. And it has been impossible to introduce caste coaches on the railroads in the fashion of the American railroad cars or station waiting rooms which segregate "white" from "colored" in the southern states. All caste relations have been shaken, and the stratum of intellectuals bred by the English are here, as elsewhere, bearers of a specific nationalism. They will greatly strengthen this slow and irresistible process. For the time being, however, the caste structure still stands quite firmly.

First we must ask: with what concepts shall we define a "caste"? (The term is of Portuguese derivation. The ancient Indian name is *varna*, "color.") Let us ask it in the negative: What is not a caste? Or, what traits of other associations, really or apparently related to caste, are lacking in caste? What, for instance, is the difference between caste and tribe?

6. Caste and Tribe

AS LONG as a tribe has not become wholly a guest or a pariah people, it usually has a fixed tribal territory. A genuine caste

never has a fixed territory. To a very considerable extent, the caste members live in the country, segregated in villages. Usually in each village there is, or was, only one caste with full title to the soil. But dependent village artisans and laborers also live with this caste. In any case, the caste does not form a local, territorial, corporate body, for this would contradict its nature. A tribe is, or at least originally was, bound together by obligatory blood revenge, mediated directly or indirectly through the sib. A caste never has anything to do with such blood revenge.

Originally, a tribe normally comprised many, often almost all, of the possible pursuits necessary for the gaining of subsistence. A caste may comprise people who follow very different pursuits; at least this is the case today, and for certain upper castes this has been the case since very early times. Yet so long as the caste has not lost its character, the kinds of pursuits admissible without loss of caste are always, in some way, quite strictly limited. Even today "caste" and "way of earning a living" are so firmly linked that often a change of occupation is correlated with a division of caste. This is not the case for a "tribe."

Normally a tribe comprises people of every social rank. A caste may well be divided into subcastes with extraordinarily different social ranks. Today this is usually the case; one caste frequently contains several hundred subcastes. In such cases, these subcastes may be related to one another exactly, or almost exactly, as are different castes. If this is the case, the subcastes, in reality, are castes; the caste name common to all of them has merely historical significance, or almost so, and serves to support the social pretensions of degraded subcastes towards third castes. Hence, by its very nature, caste is inseparably bound up with social ranks within a larger community.

It is decisive for a tribe that it is originally and normally a political association. The tribe is either an independent association, as is always originally the case, or the association is part of a tribal league; or, it may constitute a *phyle*, that is, part of a political association commissioned with certain political tasks and having certain rights: franchise, holding quotas of the political offices, and the right of assuming its share or turn of political, fiscal, and liturgical obligations. A caste is never a political association, even if political associations in individual cases have burdened castes with liturgies, as may have happened repeatedly during the Indian Middle Ages (Bengal). In this case, castes are

in the same position as merchant and craft guilds, sibs, and all sorts of associations. By its very nature the caste is always a purely social and possibly occupational association, which forms part of and stands within a social community. But the caste is not necessarily, and by no means regularly, an association forming part of only one political association; rather it may reach beyond, or it may fall short of, the boundaries of any one political association. There are castes diffused over all of India. Of the present Hindu castes (the chief ones), one may say that twenty-five are diffused throughout most of the regions of India. These castes comprise about 88 million Hindus out of the total of 217 million. Among them we find the ancient priest, warrior, and merchant castes: the Brahmans (14.60 million); Rajputs (9.43 million); Baniya (3.00 or only 1.12 million—according to whether or not one includes the split subcastes); Kayasths (ancient caste of official scribes 2.17 million); as well as ancient tribal castes like the Ahirs (9.59 million); Jats (6.98 million); or the great, unclean, occupational castes like the Chamar, the leather workers (11.50 million); the Shudra caste of the Teli, the oil pressers (4.27 million); the genteel trade caste of the goldsmiths, the Sonar (1.26 million); the ancient castes of village artisans, the Kumhar (potters) (3.42 million) and Lohar (blacksmiths) (2.07 million); the lower peasant caste of the Koli (coolie, derived from *kul*, clan, meaning something like “kin”—*Gevatter*) (3.17 million); and other individual castes of varying origin. The great differences in caste names as well as several distinctions of social rank which, in the individual provinces, derive from castes obviously equal in descent, make direct comparisons extremely difficult. Yet today, each of the subcastes and also most of the small castes exist only in their respective small districts. Political division has often strongly influenced the caste order of individual areas, but precisely the most important castes have remained interstate in scope.

With regard to the substance of its social norms, a tribe usually differs from a caste in that the exogamy of the totem or of the villages co-exist with the exogamy of the sibs. Endogamy has existed only under certain conditions, but by no means always, for the tribe as a whole. Rules of endogamy, however, always form the essential basis of a caste. Dietary rules and rules of commensality are always characteristic of the caste but are by no means characteristic of the tribe.

We have already observed that when a tribe loses its foothold

in its territory it becomes a guest or a pariah people. It may then approximate caste to the point of being actually indistinguishable from it. The Banjaras, for instance, are partly organized as castes in the Central Provinces. In Mysore, however, they are organized as an (Animist) tribe. In both cases they make their living in the same way. Similar instances frequently occur. The differences that remain will be discussed when we determine the positive characteristics of caste. In contrast to the tribe, a caste is usually related intimately to special ways of earning a living, on the one hand, and, on the other, to social rank. Now the question arises, how is caste related to the occupational associations (merchant and craft guilds) and how is it related to status groups? Let us begin with the former.

7. Caste and Guild

GUILDS of merchants, and of traders who figured as merchants by selling their own produce, as well as craft guilds, existed in India during the period of the development of cities and especially during the period in which the great salvation religions originated. As we shall see, the salvation religions and the guilds were related. The guilds usually emerged within the cities, but occasionally they emerged outside; survivals of these are still in existence. During the period of the flowering of the cities, the position of the guilds was quite comparable to that occupied by guilds in the cities of the medieval Occident.

The guild association (the *mahajan*, literally, the same as *popolo grasso*) faced the prince on one hand and, on the other, the economically dependent artisans. These relations were about the same as those of the great guilds of literati and of merchants with the lower craft-guilds (*popolo minuto*) of the Occident. In the same way, associations of lower craft guilds existed in India (the *panch*). Moreover, the liturgical guild of Egyptian and late Roman character was perhaps not entirely lacking in the emerging patrimonial states of India. The uniqueness of the development of India lay in the fact that these beginnings of guild organization in the cities led neither to the city autonomy of the Occidental type nor, after the development of the great patrimonial states, to a social and economic organization of the territories corresponding to the "territorial economy"¹⁰ of the Occident. Rather, the Hindu caste system, whose beginnings

certainly preceded these organizations, became paramount. In part, this caste system entirely displaced the other organizations; in part, it crippled them; it prevented them from attaining any considerable importance. The "spirit" of this caste system, however, was totally different from that of the merchant and craft guilds.

The merchant and craft guilds of the Occident cultivated religious interests as did the castes. In connection with these interests, questions of social rank also played a considerable role among guilds. Which rank order the guilds should follow, during processions, for instance, was a question occasionally fought over more stubbornly than questions of economic interest. Furthermore, in a "closed" guild, that is, one with a numerically fixed quota of income opportunities, the position of the master was hereditary. There were also quasi-guild associations and associations derived from guilds in which the right to membership was acquired in hereditary succession. In late Antiquity, membership in the liturgical guilds was even a compulsory and hereditary obligation in the way of a *glebae adscriptio*, which bound the peasant to the soil. Finally, in the medieval Occident there were "opprobrious" trades, which were religiously déclassé; these correspond to the "unclean" castes of India. The fundamental difference, however, between occupational associations and caste is not affected by these circumstances.

First, that which is partly an exception and partly an occasional consequence for the occupational association is truly fundamental for the caste; the magical distance between castes in their mutual relationships.

In 1901 in the "United Provinces" roughly ten million people (out of a total of about forty million) belonged to castes with which physical contact is ritually polluting. In the Madras Presidency, roughly thirteen million people (out of about fifty-two million) could infect others even without direct contact if they approached within a certain, though varying, distance. The merchant and craft guilds of the Middle Ages acknowledged no ritual barriers whatsoever between the individual guilds and artisans, apart from the aforementioned small stratum of people engaged in opprobrious trades. Pariah peoples and pariah workers (for example, the knacker and hangman), by virtue of their special positions, come close sociologically to the unclean castes of India. And there were factual barriers restricting the connubium between differently esteemed occupations, but there

were no ritual barriers, such as are absolutely essential for caste. Within the circle of the "honorable" people, ritual barriers to commensalism were completely absent; but such barriers belong to the basis of caste differences.

Furthermore, caste is essentially hereditary. This hereditary character was not, and is not, merely the result of monopolizing and restricting the earning opportunities to a definite maximum quota, as was the case among the absolutely closed guilds of the Occident, which at no time were numerically predominant. Such quota restriction existed, and still exists in part, among the occupational castes of India; but restriction is strongest not in the cities but in the villages, where a quota restriction of opportunities, insofar as it has existed, has had no connection with a guild organization and no need for it. As we shall see, the typical Indian village artisans have been the hereditary "tied cottagers" of the village.

The most important castes, although not all castes, have guaranteed the individual member a certain subsistence, as was the case among our master craftsmen. But not all castes have monopolized a whole trade as the guild at least strove to do. The guild of the Occident, at least during the Middle Ages, was regularly based upon the apprentice's free choice of a master and thus it made possible the transition of the children to occupations other than those of their parents, a circumstance which never occurs in the caste system. This difference is fundamental. Whereas the closure of the guilds toward the outside became stricter with diminishing income opportunities, among the castes the reverse was often observed, namely, they maintained their ritually required way of life, and hence their inherited trade, most easily when income opportunities were plentiful.

Another difference between guild and caste is of even greater importance. The occupational associations of the medieval Occident were often engaged in violent struggles among themselves, but at the same time they evidenced a tendency towards fraternization. The *mercanzia* and the *popolo* in Italy, and the "citizenry" in the north, were regularly, organizations of occupational associations. The *capitano del popolo* in the south and, frequently, though not always, the *Bürgermeister* in the north were heads of oath-bound organizations of the occupational associations, at least according to their original and specific meaning. Such organizations seized political power, either legally or illegally. Irrespective of their legal forms, the late medieval city

in fact rested upon the fraternization of its productive citizenry. This was at least the case where the political form of the medieval city contained its most important sociological characteristics.

As a rule the fraternization of the citizenry was carried through by the fraternization of the guilds, just as the ancient *polis* in its innermost being rested upon the fraternization of military associations and sibbs. Note that the base was "fraternization." It was not of secondary importance that every foundation of the occidental city, in antiquity and the Middle Ages, went hand in hand with the establishment of a cultic community of the citizens. Furthermore, it is of significance that the common meal of the *prytanes*, the drinking rooms of the merchant and craft guilds, and their common processions to the church played such a great role in the official documents of the occidental cities, and that the medieval citizens had, at least in the Lord's Supper, commensalism with one another in the most festive form. Fraternization at all times presupposes commensalism: it does not have to be actually practiced in everyday life, but it must be ritually possible. The caste order precluded this.

Complete fraternization of castes has been and is impossible because it is one of the constitutive principles of the castes that there should be at least ritually inviolable barriers against complete commensalism among different castes. As with all sociological phenomena, the contrast here is not an absolute one, nor are transitions lacking, yet it is a contrast which in essential features has been historically decisive.

The commensalism existing between castes really only confirms the rule. For instance, there is commensalism between certain Rajput and Brahman subcastes which rests upon the fact that the latter have of yore been the family priests of the former. If the member of a low caste merely looks at the meal of a Brahman, it ritually defiles the Brahman. When the last great famine caused the British administration to open public soup kitchens accessible to everyone, the tally of patrons showed that impoverished people of all castes had in their need visited the kitchens, although it was of course strictly and ritually taboo to eat in this manner in the sight of people not belonging to one's caste. A separate lower caste (the Kallars) has arisen in Bengal among people who had infringed the ritual and dietary laws during the famine of 1866, and in consequence been excommunicated. Within this caste, in turn, the minority separate themselves

as a subcaste from the majority. The former maintaining a price ratio of six seers for the rupee, separated themselves from those maintaining a price ratio of ten seers for the rupee.

At the time of the famine the strict castes were not satisfied with the possibility of cleansing magical defilement by ritual penance. Yet under threat of excommunicating the participants, they did succeed in securing employment only of high-caste cooks; the hands of these cooks were considered ritually clean by all the castes concerned. Furthermore, they made certain that often a sort of symbolic *chambre séparée* was created for each caste by means of chalk lines drawn around the tables and similar devices. Apart from the fact that in the face of starvation even strong magical powers fail to carry weight, every strictly ritualist religion, such as the Indian, Hebrew, and Roman, is able to open ritualistic back doors for extreme situations.

Yet, it is a long way from this situation to a possible commensalism and fraternization as they are known in the Occident. To be sure, during the rise of the kingdoms, we find that the king invited the various castes, the Shudra included, to his table. They were seated, however, at least according to the classic conception, in separate rooms; and the fact that a caste that claimed to belong to the Vaishya was seated among the Sudra in the Vellala Charita occasioned a famous (semi-legendary) conflict, which we shall have to discuss later.

Let us now consider the Occident. In his letter to the Galatians (11:12,13ff.) Paul reproaches Peter for having eaten in Antioch with the gentiles and for having withdrawn and separated himself afterwards, under the influence of the Jerusalemites. "And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him." That the reproach of dissimulation made to this very Apostle has not been effaced shows perhaps just as clearly as does the occurrence itself the tremendous importance this event had for the early Christians. Indeed, this shattering of the ritual barriers against commensalism meant a destruction of the voluntary ghetto, which in its effects is far more incisive than any compulsory ghetto. It meant to destroy the situation of Jewry as a pariah people, a situation that was ritually imposed upon this people.

For the Christians it meant the origin of Christian "freedom," which Paul celebrated triumphantly again and again; for this freedom meant the universalism of Paul's mission, which cut across nations and status groups. The elimination of all ritual barriers of birth for the community of the eucharists, as realized

in Antioch, was, in connection with the religious pre-conditions, the hour of conception for the occidental "citizenry." This is the case even though its birth occurred more than a thousand years later in the revolutionary *conjurations* of the medieval cities. For without commensalism—in Christian terms, without the Lord's Supper—no oathbound fraternity and no medieval urban citizenry would have been possible.

India's caste order formed an obstacle to this, which was unsurmountable, at least by its own forces. For the castes are not governed only by this eternal ritual division. A nabob of Bankura, upon the request of a Chandala, wished to compel the Karnakar (metal workers) caste to eat with the Chandala. According to the legend of the origin of the Mahmudpurias, this request caused part of this caste to flee to Mahmudpura and to constitute itself as a separate subcaste with higher social claims. Even if there are no antagonisms of economic interests, a profound estrangement usually exists between the castes, and often deadly jealousy and hostility as well, precisely because the castes are completely oriented towards social rank. This orientation stands in contrast to the occupational associations of the Occident. Whatever part questions of etiquette and rank have played among these associations, and often it has been quite considerable, such questions could never have gained the religiously anchored significance which they have had for the Hindu.

The consequences of this difference have been of considerable political importance. By its solidarity, the association of Indian guilds, the *mahajan*, was a force which the princes had to take very much into account. It was said: "The prince must recognize what the guilds do to the people, whether it is merciful or cruel." The guilds acquired privileges from the princes for loans of money, which is reminiscent of our medieval conditions. The *shreshthi* (elders) of the guilds belonged to the mightiest notables and ranked equally with the warrior and the priest nobility of their time. In the areas and at the time that these conditions prevailed, the power of the castes was undeveloped and partly hindered and shaken by the religions of salvation, which were hostile to the Brahmans. The later turn in favor of the monopoly rule of the caste system not only increased the power of the Brahmans but also that of the princes, and it broke the power of the guilds. For the castes excluded every solidarity and every politically powerful fraternization of the citizenry and of the trades. If the prince observed the ritual traditions and the social

pretensions based upon them, which existed among those castes most important for him, he could not only play off the castes against one another—which he did—but he had nothing whatever to fear from them, especially if the Brahmans stood by his side. Accordingly, it is not difficult even at this point to guess the political interests which had a hand in the game during the transformation to monopoly rule of the caste system. This shift steered India's social structure—which for a time apparently stood close to the threshold of European urban development—into a course that led far away from any possibility of such development. In these world-historical differences the fundamentally important contrast between “caste” and “guild,” or any other “occupational association,” is strikingly revealed.

If the caste differs fundamentally from the guild and from any other kind of merely occupational association, and if the core of the caste system is connected with social rank, how then is the caste related to the status group, which finds its genuine expression in social rank?

8. *Caste and Status Group*

WHAT is a “status group?” “Classes” are groups of people who, from the standpoint of specific interests, have the same economic position. Ownership or nonownership of material goods, or possession of definite skills constitutes a class situation. “Status,” however, is a quality of social honor or a lack of it, and is in the main conditioned as well as expressed through a specific style of life. Social honor can adhere directly to a class situation, and it is also, indeed most of the time, determined by the average class situation of the status-group members. This, however, is not necessarily the case. Status membership, in turn, influences class situation in that the style of life required by status groups makes them prefer special kinds of property or gainful pursuits and reject others. A status group can be closed (status by descent) or it can be open.*

A caste is doubtless a closed status group. All the obligations

* It is incorrect to think of the “occupational status group” as an alternative. The “style of life,” not the “occupation,” is always decisive. This style may require a certain profession (for instance, military service), but the nature of the occupational service resulting from the claims of a style of life always remain decisive (for instance, military service as a knight rather than as a mercenary). (*Eds.*)

and barriers that membership in a status group entails also exist in a caste, in which they are intensified to the utmost degree. The Occident has known legally closed "estates," in the sense that intermarriage with nonmembers of the group was lacking. But, as a rule, this bar against connubium held only to the extent that marriages contracted in spite of the rule constituted *mésalliances*, with the consequence that children of the "left-handed" marriage would follow the status of the lower partner.

Europe still acknowledges such status barriers for the high nobility. America acknowledges them between whites and Negroes (including all mixed bloods) in the southern states of the union. But in America these barriers imply that marriage is absolutely and legally inadmissible, quite apart from the fact that such intermarriage would result in social boycott.

Among the Hindu castes at the present time, not only intermarriage between castes but even intermarriage between subcastes is usually absolutely shunned. Already in the books of law mixed bloods from different castes belong to a lower caste than either of the parents, and in no case do they belong to the three higher ("twice-born") castes. A different state of affairs, however, prevailed in earlier days and still exists today for the most important castes. Today one occasionally encounters full connubium among subcastes of the same caste, as well as among castes of equal social standing. According to Gait's general report for 1911,¹¹ this was the case for the equally genteel castes of the Baidya and Kayastha in Bengal, the Kanet and the Khas in the Punjab, and, sporadically, among the Brahmans and Rajputs, and the Sonars, Nais, and the Kanets (women). Enriched Maratha peasants may avail themselves of Moratha women for a sufficient dowry.

In earlier times this was undoubtedly more often the case. Above all, originally connubium was obviously not absolutely excluded, but rather hypergamy was the rule. Among the Rajputs in Punjab, hypergamy often still exists to such an extent that even Chamar girls are purchased. Intermarriage between a girl of higher caste and a lower-caste man was considered an offense against the status honor of the girl's family. However, to own a wife of lower caste was not considered an offense, and her children were not considered degraded, or at least only partially so. According to the law of inheritance, which is certainly the product of a later period, the children had to take

second place in inheritance (just as in Israel the sentence that the "children of the servant"—and of the foreign woman—"should not inherit in Israel" has been the law of a later period, as is the case everywhere else).

The interest of upper-class men in the legality of polygamy, which they could afford economically, continued to exist, even when the acute shortage of women among the invading warriors had ended. Such shortages have everywhere compelled conquerors to marry girls of subject populations. The result in India was, however, that the lower-caste girls had a large marriage market, and the lower the caste stood the larger was their marriage market; whereas the marriage market for girls of the highest castes was restricted to their own caste. Moreover, by virtue of the competition of the lower-caste girls, this restricted marriage market was by no means monopolistically guaranteed to upper-caste girls. And this caused the women in the lower castes, by virtue of the general demand for women, to bring high prices as brides. It was in part as a consequence of this dearth of women, that polyandry originated. The formation of marriage cartels among villages or among special associations, *Golis*, as frequently found, for instance, among the *Vania* (merchant) castes in Gujarat and also among peasant castes, is a counter-measure against the hypergamy of the wealthy and the city people, which raised the price of brides for the middle classes and for the rural population. If in India¹² the whole village—the unclean castes included—consider themselves to be interrelated, that is, if the new marriage partner is addressed by all as "son-in-law" and the older generation is addressed by all as "uncle," it is evident that this has nothing whatsoever to do with derivation from a "primitive group marriage"; this is indeed as little true in India as elsewhere.

Among the upper castes, however, the sale of girls to a bridegroom of rank was difficult, and the more difficult it became, the more was failure to marry considered a disgrace for both the girl and her parents. The bridegroom had to be bought by the parents with incredibly high dowries, and his enlistment (through professional matchmakers) became the parents' most important worry. Even during the infancy of the girl it was a sorrow for the parents. Finally, it was considered an outright "sin" for a girl to reach puberty without being married. This has led to grotesque results: for example, the marriage practice of

the Kulin Brahmans, which enjoys a certain fame. The Kulin Brahmans are much in demand as bridegrooms; they have made a business of marrying *in absentia*, upon request and for money, girls who thus escape the ignominy of maidenhood. The girls, however, remain with their families and see the bridegroom only if business or other reasons accidentally bring him to a place where he has one (or several) such "wives" in residence. Then he shows his marriage contract to the father-in-law and uses the father's house as a "cheap hotel." In addition, without any costs, he has the enjoyment of the girl, for she is considered his "legitimate" wife.

Elsewhere infanticide is usually a result of restricted opportunities for subsistence among poor populations. But in India female infanticide was instituted precisely by the upper castes. This occurred especially among the Rajputs. Despite the severe English laws of 1829, as late as 1869, in twenty-two villages of Rajputana there were twenty-three girls and 284 boys. In an 1836 count, in some Rajput areas, not one single live girl of over one year of age was found in a population of 10,000 souls! Infanticide existed alongside child marriage. Child marriage has determined, first, the fact that in India some girls five to ten years old are already widowed and that they remain widowed for life. This is connected with widow celibacy, an institution which, in India as elsewhere, was added to widow suicide. Widow suicide was derived from the custom of chivalry: the burial of his personal belongings, especially his women, with the dead lord. Secondly, marriages of immature girls has brought about a high mortality rate in childhood.

All of this makes it clear that in the field of connubium, caste intensifies "status" principles in an extreme manner. Today hypergamy exists as a general caste rule only within the same caste, and even there it is a specialty of the Rajput caste and of some others that stand close to the Rajput socially, or to their ancient tribal territory. This is the case, for instance, with such castes as the Bhat, Khatri, Karwar, Gujar, and Jat. However, the rule is strict endogamy of the caste and of the subcaste; in the case of the latter, this rule is, in the main, broken only by marriage cartels.

The norms of commensalism are similar to those of connubium: a status group has no social intercourse with social inferiors. In the southern states of America, social intercourse

between a white and a Negro would result in the boycott of the former. As a status group, caste enhances and transposes this social closure into the sphere of religion, or rather of magic. The ancient concepts of taboo and their social applications were indeed widely diffused in India's geographical environs and may well have contributed materials to this process. To these taboos were added borrowed totemic ritualism and, finally, notions of the magical impurity of certain activities, such as have existed everywhere with widely varying content and intensity.

The Hindu dietary rules are not simple in nature and by no means do they concern merely the questions (1) what may be eaten, and (2) who may eat together at the same table. These two points are covered by strict rules, which are chiefly restricted to members of the same caste. The dietary rules concern, above all, the further questions: (3) Out of whose hand may one take food of a certain kind? For genteel houses this means above all: Whom may one use for a cook? And a further question is: (4) Whose mere glance upon the food is to be excluded? With (3) there is a difference to be noted between food and drink, according to whether water, and food cooked in water (*kachcha*) is concerned, or food cooked in melted butter (*pakka*). *Kachcha* is far more exclusive. The question with whom one may smoke is closely connected with norms of commensality in the narrower sense. Originally, one smoked out of the same pipe, which was passed around; therefore, smoking together was dependent upon the degree of ritual purity of the partner. All these rules, however, belong in one and the same category of a far broader set of norms, all of which are status characteristics of ritual caste rank.

The social rank positions of all castes depend upon the question of from whom the highest castes accept *kachcha* and *pakka* and with whom they dine and smoke. Among the Hindu castes the Brahmans are always at the top in such connections. But the following questions are equal in importance to these, and closely connected with them: Does a Brahman undertake the religious services of the members of a caste? And possibly: to which of the very differently evaluated subcastes does the Brahman belong? Just as the Brahman is the last, though not the only authority in determining, by his behavior in questions of commensalism, the rank of a caste, so likewise does he determine questions of services. The barber of a ritually clean caste

unconditionally serves only certain castes. He may shave and care for the "manicure" of others, but not for their "pedicure." And he does not serve some castes at all. Other wage workers, especially laundrymen, behave in a similar manner. Usually, although with some exceptions, commensality is attached to the caste; connubium is almost always attached to the subcaste; whereas usually, although with exceptions, the services by priests and wageworkers are attached to commensality.

The discussion above may suffice to demonstrate the extraordinary complexity of the rank relations of the caste system. It may also show the factors by which the caste differs from an ordinary status order. The caste order is oriented religiously and ritually to a degree not even partially attained elsewhere. If the expression "church" was not inapplicable to Hinduism, one could perhaps speak of a rank order of church estates.

9. *The Social Rank Order of the Castes in General*

WHEN the Census of India (1901) attempted to list by rank contemporary Hindu castes in the presidencies—two to three thousand or even more, according to the method of counting used—certain groups of castes were established which are distinguishable from one another according to the following criteria:

First come the Brahmans, and following them, a series of castes which, claim rightly or wrongly, to belong to the two other "twice-born" castes of classical theory: the Kshatriya and the Vaishya. In order to signify this, they claim the right to wear the "holy belt." This is a right which some of them have only recently rediscovered and which, in the view of the Brahman castes, who are seniors in rank, would certainly belong only to some members of the twice-born castes. But as soon as the right of a caste to wear the holy belt is acknowledged, this caste is unconditionally recognized as being absolutely ritually "clean." From such a caste the high-caste Brahmans accept food of every kind.

Throughout the system, a third group of castes follow. They are counted among the Satsudra, the "clean Shudra" of classical doctrine. In Northern and Central India they are the Jalacharaniya, that is, castes who may give water to a Brahman and from whose *lota* (water bottle) the Brahman accepts water.

Close to them are castes, in Northern and Central India, whose water a Brahman would not always accept (that is, acceptance or nonacceptance would possibly depend on the Brahman's rank) or whose water he would never accept (Jalabyabaharya). The high-caste barber does not serve them unconditionally (no pedicure), and the laundryman does not wash their laundry. But they are not considered absolutely "unclean" ritually. They are the Shudra in the usual sense in which the classical teachings refer to them. Finally, there are castes who are considered unclean. All temples are closed to them, and no Brahman and no barber will serve them. They must live outside the village district, and they infect either by touch or, in Southern India, even by their presence at a distance (up to sixty-four feet with the Paraiyans). All these restrictions are related to those castes which, according to the classical doctrine, originated from ritually forbidden sexual intercourse between members of different castes.

Even though this grouping of castes is not equally true throughout India (indeed there are striking exceptions), nevertheless, on the whole, it can be quite well sustained. Within these groupings one could proceed with further gradations of caste rank, but such gradations would present extremely varied characteristics: among the upper castes the criterion would be the correctness of life practices with regard to sib organization, endogamy, child marriage, widow celibacy, cremation of the dead, ancestral sacrifice, foods and drinks, and social intercourse with unclean castes. Among the lower caste one would have to differentiate according to the rank of the Brahmans who are still ready to serve them or who will no longer do so, and according to whether or not castes other than Brahmans accept water from them. In all these cases, it is by no means rare that castes of lower rank raise stricter demands than castes who otherwise are considered to have a higher standing. The extraordinary variety of such rules of rank order forbids here any closer treatment. The acceptance or avoidance of meat, at least of beef, is decisive for caste rank, and is therefore a symptom of it, but an uncertain one. The kinds of occupation and income, which entail the most far-reaching consequences for connubium, commensalism, and ritual rank, are decisive in the case of all castes. We shall speak of this later.

In addition to all these criteria, we find a mass of individual

traits. Thus, for instance, the Makishya Kaibarthas (in Bengal) increasingly reject community with the Chasi Kalibarthas because the latter personally sell their (agricultural) products in the market, which the Makishya do not do. Other castes are considered *déclassé* because their women participate in selling in the stores; generally, the coöperation of women in economic pursuits is considered specifically plebeian. The social and work structure of agriculture is strongly determined by the fact that certain acts are considered absolutely degrading. Often caste rank determines whether or not one uses oxen and horses or other draft and pack animals in gainful work; it determines which animals he uses and how many (for example, the number of oxen employed by the oil pressers is thus determined).

Yet, even if we took them all into account, we could not establish a list of castes according to rank because rank differs absolutely from place to place, because only some of the castes are universally diffused, and because a great many castes, being only locally represented, have no interlocal rank order which could be determined. Furthermore, great rank differences appear between subcastes of a single caste, especially among the upper castes, but also among some of the middle castes. One would often have to place individual subcastes far behind another caste, which otherwise would be evaluated as lower.

In general, the problem arose (for the census workers): Which unit should really be considered a caste? Within one and the same caste, that is, a group considered to be a caste in Hindu tradition, there is neither necessarily connubium nor always full commensalism. Connubium is the case with only a few castes, and even with them there are reservations. The subcaste is the predominantly endogamous unit, and in some castes there are several hundred subcastes. The subcastes are either purely local castes (diffused over districts of varying size), and/or they constitute associations which are delimited and especially designated according to actual or alleged descent, former or present kind of occupational pursuit, or other differences in style of life. They consider themselves as parts of the caste and in addition to their own names carry the name of the caste; they may be legitimated in this by a division of the caste, or by reception into the caste, or simply by usurpation of rank. Only the subcastes actually carry on a life of unified regulation, and they alone are organized—insofar as a caste organization exists. Caste

itself often designates merely a social claim raised by these closed associations. Often, but not always, the caste is the womb of the subcaste; and on rare occasions the caste is characterized by certain organizations common to all subcastes. More frequently, the caste has certain characteristics of life conduct traditionally common to all subcastes.

Nevertheless, as a rule the unity of caste exists side by side with the unity of subcastes. There are sanctions against marriage and commensalism outside the caste which are stronger than those imposed upon members of different subcastes within the same caste. Also, just as new subcastes form themselves easily, the barriers between them may be more unstable; whereas the barriers between communities once recognized as castes are maintained with extraordinary perseverance.

It is perhaps impossible to determine the rank order of the castes; it is contested and subject to change. An attempt was made in 1901 by the British census to settle this rank order once and for all. It was not repeated; the excitement and discontent that resulted was out of all proportion to the intended result. The attempt to classify the castes set off a signal for competitive demands by the castes for social rank and the procurement of historical "proofs" to support their claims. It led to remonstrances and protests of all kinds and called forth a considerable, and partly instructive literature.

Castes of questionable rank sought to exploit the census for stabilizing their position and used the census authorities, as one census expert put it, as a kind of herald's office. Amazing claims of new rank were made. The Bengal Tshandal, for instance, the lowest caste alleged to stem from a mixture of Brahman women with Shudra men (actually a Hinduized guest people from Bengal), rebaptized themselves Namashudra and sought to trace their descent to a pure caste and "prove" their Brahman blood.

Quite apart from such cases, however, were various former professional soldier and robber castes, which since the pacification of the land had led quiet lives as land-tilling castes. Now they seized the opportunity to pose as Kshatriyas. Nonrecognized "Brahmans" (ancient tribal priests) buttressed their claims for recognition. All castes in any way engaged in trade sought recognition as Vaishyas. Animistic tribes demanded registration as castes and with as high rank as possible. Certain sects sought re-integration into the Hindu community.

Such agitation over the question of rank as the census occasioned had not occurred previously. But the past was in no way free from revolutions of rank order.

Who arbitrated such rank contests? And who made decisions on matters related to rank? It was stated above that, in general, the Brahmans to this day, are theoretically, the final authorities on questions of rank. Official banquets requiring the attendance of Brahmans always necessitated correct decisions about rank questions. The Brahmans in the past, as now, were in no position to settle the problems alone. As far as we can determine, in the period before the foreign conquests rank questions were always decided by the king or his official advisor on ritualistic matters. Such a chief of protocol was either a Brahman or an official who, as a rule, sought the legal advice of a Brahman. We know, however, of many cases in which Indian kings personally degraded single castes in due form or expelled individuals, including Brahmans from their castes. The person concerned often experienced this as an unjust infringement upon his well-established rights. Degraded castes often continued to contest such decisions for centuries; the Brahmans, however, usually took it.

Moreover, the king advised by Brahmans who had immigrated at his request, had authority to make decisions concerning the original or renewed ordering of caste ranks throughout large territories as, for instance, East-Bengal under the Sena-dynasty. The king was able, too, to make decisions about single caste duties. Under the last great all-Indian rule of the Mahrattas at the turn of the eighteenth century, the legal opinions of Brahmans about questions of single caste duties were submitted to the Peshwa, a descendant of a Brahman family, who obviously gave his *exequatur* after substantive discussion of the controversial issues. The abolition of this support of the Brahmans by the secular arm today—except in the remaining Hindu vassal states where residues survive—is said to have caused the diminished compliance with the decisions of the Brahmans. In short, religious and secular power coöperated in the interest of the legitimate order.

The position of the king allowed him to select the most pliable of the Brahmans. Under the circumstances, not the king's power, but that of the Brahmans and the castes, is astounding. Brahmanical and caste power resulted from the inviolability of all sacred law which was believed to ward off evil enchantment. In

problematic caste situations Indian kings followed the unconditional and magically sanctioned principle "Prerogative breaks the common law"; the caste, on the other hand, was sustained only by its economic importance. The royal judge was bound by the traditional customs of the single caste; jury members for the particular caste had to be admitted to court trials, and castes were brought before the royal judge only by organs of the single caste which normally had jurisdiction over caste affairs. Even today single caste organs settle caste problems: they excommunicate, impose fines or amends, settle disputes, and, in relative independence, develop through their judicial practices the norms for newly emerging legal questions. We cannot, therefore, avoid a survey of the problems of caste jurisdiction, practice, and organization.

With this in mind, it is necessary to examine the principles which determine the structure and boundary lines of the various caste types, a question hitherto touched only tangentially.

10. *Caste and Sib*

THERE remains to be examined still another important peculiarity of Indian society which is intimately interrelated with the caste system. Not only the formation of castes but the heightened significance of the sib belongs to the fundamental traits of Indian society. The Hindu social order, to a larger extent than anywhere else in the world, is organized in terms of the principle of *clan charisma*. "Charisma" means that an extraordinary, at least not generally available, quality adheres to a person. Originally charisma was thought of as a magical quality. "Clan charisma" means that this extraordinary quality adheres to sib members per se and not, as originally, to a single person.

We are familiar with residues of this sociologically important phenomenon of clan charisma particularly in the hereditary "divine right of kings" of our dynasties. To a lesser degree the legend of the "blue blood" of a nobility, whatever its specific origin, belongs to the same sociological type. Clan charisma is one of the ways personal charisma may be "routinized," (i.e., made a part of everyday social experience).

In contrast to the hereditary chieftain in times of peace who, among some tribes, could also be a woman, the warrior king

and his men were heroes whose successes had proven their purely personal and magical qualities. The authority of the war leader, like that of the sorcerer, rested upon strictly personal charisma. The successor also originally claimed his rank by virtue of personal charisma. (The problem, of course, is that more than one "successor" may raise such claims.) The unavoidable demand for law and order in the question of successorship forces the followers to consider different possibilities: either the designation of the qualified successor by the leader; or the selection of a new leader by his disciples, followers, or officials. The progressive regulation of these originally spontaneous and nonprocedural questions may lead to the development of elective bodies of officials in the manner of "princes," "electors," and "cardinals."

In India a suggestive belief won out: that charisma is a quality attached to the *sib* per se, that the qualified successor or successors should be sought within the *sib*. This led to the *inheritance* of charisma, which originally had nothing to do with heredity. The wider the spheres to which magical belief applied, the more consistently developed such beliefs became, the wider, in turn, the possible field of application of clan charisma. Not only heroic and magico-cultic abilities, but any form of authority, came to be viewed as determined and bound by clan charisma. Special talents, not only artistic but craft talent as well, fell within the sphere of clan charisma.

In India the development of the principle of clan charisma far surpassed what is usual elsewhere in the world. This did not occur all at once; clan charisma was in conflict with ancient genuine charisma which continued to uphold only the personal endowment of the single individual, as well as with the pedagogy of status cultivation.

Even in the Indian Middle Ages, many formalities in the apprenticeship to and practice of handicraft show strong traces of the principle of personal charisma. These are evident in the magical elements of the novitiate and the assumption by the apprentice of journeyman status. However, since, originally, occupational differentiation was largely interethnic and the practitioners of many trades were members of pariah tribes, there were strong forces for the development of charismatic clan magic.

The strongest expression of clan charisma was in the sphere of authority. In India the hereditary transmission of authority,

i.e., on the basis of family ties, was normal. The further back one traces the more universal the institution of the hereditary village-headship is found to be. Merchant and craft guilds and castes had hereditary elders; anything else was normally out of the question. So self-evident was priestly, royal, and knightly office charisma that free appointment of successors to office by patrimonial rulers, like the free choice of urban occupations, occurred only during upheavals of the tradition or at the frontiers of social organization before the social order was stabilized.

The exceptional quality of the sib was (note!) realized "in principle." Not only could knightly or priestly sibs prove to be barren of magical qualities and thus lose them as an individual does, but a *homo notus* could prove his possession of charisma and thereby legitimatize his sib as charismatic. Thus, charismatic clan authority could be quite unstable in the single case.

In the study of W. Hopkins of present-day Ahmadbad, the Nayar Sheth—the counterpart of the medieval Lord Mayor of the Occident—was the elder of the richest Jain family of the city. He and the Vishnuite Sheth of the clothier's guild, who was also hereditary, jointly determined public opinion on all social, i.e., ritualistic and proprietary questions of the city. The other hereditary Sheths were less influential beyond their guilds and castes. However, at the time Hopkins made his study a rich manufacturer outside all guilds had successfully entered the competition.

If a son was notoriously unfit his influence waned—be it the son of a craft, guild or caste elder or the son of a priest mystagogue or artist. His prestige was channelized either to a more adequate member of the particular sib or to a member (usually the elder) of the next richest sib. Not new wealth alone, but great wealth combined with personal charisma legitimatized its possessor and his sib in social situations where status conditions were still or once again fluid. Although in single cases charismatic clan authority was quite unstable, everyday life always forced compliance with sib authority once it was established. The sib always reaped the benefits of individually established charisma.

The economic effects of sib integration through magical and animistic beliefs in China was described in a previous work.* In China the charismatic glorification of the sib, countered by

* Cf. Max Weber, *The Religion of China*, Trans. by H. H. Gerth, (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1951), Chapter VII and VIII.

the examination system of patrimonial dominion, had economic consequences similar to those in India. In India, the caste organization and extensive caste autonomy and the autonomy of the guild, which was still greater because it was ritually unfettered, placed the development of commercial law almost completely in the hands of the respective interest groups. The unusual importance of trade in India would lead one to believe that a rational law of trade, trading companies, and enterprise might well have developed.

However, if one looks at the legal literature of the Indian Middle Ages one is astonished by its poverty. While partially formalistic, Indian justice and the law of evidence were basically irrational and magical. Much of it was formless in principle, because of hierocratic influence. Ritually relevant questions could only be decided by ordeals. In other questions the general moral code, unique elements of the particular case, tradition (particularly), and a few supplementary royal edicts were employed as legal sources.

Yet, in contrast to China, a formal trial procedure developed with regulated summons (*in jus vocatio*, under the Mahratts summons were served by clerks of the court). The debt-liability of heirs existed but was limited after generations. However, the collection of debts, although debt bondage was known, remained somewhat in the magical stage or in that of a modified billet system. At least as a norm, joint liability of partners was lacking. In general, the right of association appeared only late in Indian development and then only in connection with the right of religious fraternities. The law of corporations remained inconsequential. All sorts of corporations and joint property relationships received mixed treatment. There was a ruling on profit sharing which, incidentally, extended also to artisans cooperating under a foreman, hence in an *ergasterion*.¹³ Above all, however, the principle, recognized also in China, that one should grant unconditional credit and pawn objects only among personally close members of the phratry, among relatives and friends, held also in India. Debts under other circumstances were recognized only under provision of guarantors or witnessed promissory notes.¹⁴

The details of later legal practice, to be sure, were adequate to implement trading needs but they hardly promoted trade on its own. The quite considerable capitalistic development which

occurred in the face of such legal conditions can be explained only in terms of the power of guilds. They knew how to pursue their interests by use of boycott, force, and expert arbitration. However, in general, under conditions such as those described, the sib fetters of credit relationships had to remain the normal state of affairs.

The principle of clan charisma also had far-reaching consequences outside the field of commercial law. Because we are prone to think of occidental feudalism, primarily as a system of socio-economic ties, we are apt to overlook its peculiar origins and their significance.

Under the compelling military needs of the time of its origin, the feudal relationship made a free contract among sib strangers basic for the faith-bound relation between the lord and his vassals. Increasingly feudal lords developed the in-group feeling of a unitary status group. They developed eventually into the closed hereditary estate of chivalrous knights. We must not forget that this grew on the basis of sib estrangement among men who viewed themselves not as sib, clan, phratry, or tribe members but merely as status peers.

Indian development took quite a different turn. It is true that individual enfeoffment of retainers and officials with land or political rights occurred. Historically, this is clearly discernible. But it did not give the ruling stratum its stamp, and feudal status formation did not rest on land grants. Rather, as Baden-Powell¹⁵ has correctly emphasized, the character of Indian developments was derived from the sib, clan, phratry, and tribe.

Before continuing we shall have to clarify our terminology. The Irish term "clan" is ambiguous. In our terminology the typical organization of warrior communities consists of: (1) the tribe or a collectivity of "phratries"—in our terminology, primarily always associations of (originally, magically) trained warriors; (2) the sib, i.e., charismatically outstanding agnatic descendants of charismatic chieftains. The plain warrior did not necessarily have a "sib" but belonged to a "family" or a totemic (or quasi-totemic) association besides his phratry and possibly unitary age group.

A gens of overlords, however, had no totem; it had emancipated itself from it. The more the ruling tribes of India developed into a ruling class the more survivals of the totem (*devaks*) vanished and "sibs" emerged (or better, continued to

exist). A blurring of charismatic clan differences occurred when the phratry began to develop "we-feeling" on the ground of common descent, rather than of joint defense, and hence became a quasi-sib.

In India the charismatic head of the phratry distributed conquered land; manorial prerogatives among fellow-sib members; open fields among the ordinary men of the phratry. The conquering classes must be conceived of as a circle of phratries and sibs of lords dispersing over the conquered territory under the rule of the tribe.

Prerogatives were enfeoffed by the head of the phratry (*raja*) or where one existed by the tribal king (*maharaja*) only, as a rule, to his agnates. It was not a freely contracted trusteeship. Fellow-sib members claimed this grant as a birthright. Each conquest produced, in the first place, new office fiefs for the sib of the king and its subsibs. Conquest was, therefore, the *dharma* of the king.

However different some details of the Indian from its occidental counterpart, the ascendancy of the secular overlords and their estates had similar basis. No matter how often individual charismatic upstarts and their freely recruited followings shattered the firm structure of the sibs, the social process always resumed its firm course of charismatic clan organization of tribes, phratries, and sibs. Among the Aryans the ancient sacrificial priests, even at the time of the early Vedas, had become a distinguished priestly nobility. The various sibs of the priestly nobility divided according to hereditary function and appropriate clan charisma into hereditary "schools." Given the primacy of magical charisma claimed by the clans, they and their heirs—the Brahmins—became the primary propagators of this principle through Hindu society.

It is clear that the magical charisma of the clans contributed greatly to the establishment of the firm structure of caste estrangement, actually containing it *in nuce*. On the other hand, the caste order served greatly to stabilize the sib. All strata which raised claims to distinction were forced to become stratified on the pattern of the ruling castes. The exogamous kinship order was based on the sib. Social situation, ritual duty, way of life and occupational position in the end were determined by the charismatic clan principle which extended to all positions of authority. As clan charisma supported the caste so the caste, in turn, supported the charisma of the sib.

CHAPTER II

THE MAIN GROUPING OF THE CASTES

MODERN social science long considered the four castes of classical learning to be mere literary constructions. This view is no longer maintained, and our preceding discussions showed its assumptions to be far too sweeping.

Even today the usual classification of castes under the four old classes determines the stereotyped greeting of the Brahman. No wonder that present-day castes strive to be classified in terms of the Brahmans. The significance of the four ancient castes is confirmed by the inscriptions on monuments, which frequently refer to them. Of course, it is important to remember that the authors of the inscriptions were quite as much under the spell of the literary tradition as the modern representatives of a caste claiming Kshatriya or Vaishya rank. But the very nature of the phenomena we are dealing with confirms the assumption that the statements in the law books refer to a serious—be it ever so stereotyped—picture of historical social reality, and are not simply constructions out of nothing.

The two lower so-called "castes" of the law books were perhaps never castes at all in the present-day sense of the term, but, even in classical times, were rank-classes of castes. Originally they were simply status groups. An occasional passage of the literature observes: "The Vaishya and Shudra were there before the Brahmans and Kshatriyas ever existed." The Vaishyas were the ancient freemen who were surpassed by the noble sibs—the noble sibs being war nobles, hence chieftains, and later knightly gentes and partially, also, priestly nobles as found elsewhere. The status inferiors of the freemen were "helots" (Shudras).

The symbolic combat¹ between an Arya and a Shudra, a phase of the Gravamayana-festival, is comparable to similar significant ceremonies in Sparta. In fact, this opposition is much sharper than the one between both upper castes and the Vaishyas.

The Brahmins and Kshatriyas engaged in certain, prescribed, exclusive activities which implemented their styles of life as status groups: for the Brahmins—sacrifice, study of the Vedas, receipt of gifts (particularly land grants), and asceticism; for the Kshatriyas—political rule, knightly feats of valor. The occupations of a Vaishya—tillage and trade and, particularly, the lending of money at interest—were considered by both upper castes as unbecoming to their rank and station. However, in time of need, when it proved impossible to earn one's living conventionally, it was temporarily permissible, with some reservations, to take up the occupations of a Vaishya.

In contrast to this, the way of life of the Shudra signified "menial service." The correct Brahmin cannot join the modern army, for he would have to obey superiors from a lower caste or of barbarian descent. The classical sources subsume occupations under "menial service" for other castes in a far more explicit and literal sense than anywhere else. This is to be explained by the characteristically Indian organization of the primeval village crafts. As briefly indicated above, workers who were enumerated, in English terminology, as members of an "establishment" were actually kinds of cottagers—not serfs of individual employers but village helots to whom were leased small hereditary holdings. In Dekkan, under the Mahrattas, two typical categories of such village servants were to be found: the Baruh Balowtay, comprising the ancient typical crafts of carpenter, blacksmith, cobbler, potter, barber, washerman, bard, astrologer, leather-worker, watchman, effigy cleaner, *mullah* (in pure Hindu villages, the butchers of sacrificial sheep); and the Baruh Alowtay, comprising the later crafts of the gold and coppersmith, blacksmith, water carrier, janitor of the village gate, and courier, gardener, oil presser and a number of religious clerks. Not all positions were actually filled.² The composition of these village servants was not typical throughout. In Bombay Province the Mahars were found among them. Formerly, they were peasants, then, as expert boundary surveyors, they were degraded to village servants and settled on outlying plots. Nowadays they frequently become chauffeurs despite conservative protests. As a rule the

village compensated them for their services, not by payment for single services, but by a fixed share of the harvest yields or wages in kind. The kinds of artisans who belonged to this group varied in different regions, but in the main they are typical for all India to this day.

If we examine the Indian castes in terms of occupational composition, we find that rarely does a Brahman or Rajput, no matter how deeply degraded, ever take up one of the ancient crafts. Rajput peasants, however, are quite frequent; in fact, the majority of their caste are peasants. But, even today, the Rajput who does his own ploughing is degraded, in contrast to the absentee owner. Hence, increasing profits through overseas export, among other things, permitted a rapid increase of landlordism. Other castes which claim Kshatriya rank usually demand precedence over "rusticated" Rajputs. The ancient characteristic rejection of the trader, and the tradition of court service led the Rajputs to prefer even the lowest forms of domestic service, (held to be ritually pure), rather than engaging in a craft. From the other side of the status hierarchy there is a great demand for high-caste domestics; such persons must be ritually pure and capable in order to serve the lord and lady physically, particularly to serve water to them.

1. The Brahmins

To some extent the same circumstance determines certain monopolies of the present-day Brahman caste, particularly the employment of almost exclusively Brahman cooks in high-caste houses. For the rest, the Brahmins were and are infiltrating occupations, particularly administrative posts which demand writing skill and education—just as the clerics of our Middle Ages. In the South, the Brahmins have maintained a monopoly of administrative positions into modern times. Ritualistic obligations made it difficult for the Brahmins to enter the medical profession, and they are but sparsely represented in the field of engineering.

All of this is quite in agreement with the Indian tradition of dividing the castes into four types. The law books mirror other features of prescribed life styles of the upper castes which bear the stamp of authenticity and, in part, of great antiquity. The law books hold a man to be degraded unless he acquires the

holy belt before an affixed and prescribed age limit. Furthermore, they recognize typical patterns of conduct for different age levels—which actually held only for the highest caste, the Brahmins.

The Brahmins have never been a tribe although more than half of them live in the upper Ganges Valley—their home base—and in Bengal. Originally, the Brahmins were magicians who developed into a hierocratic caste of cultured men. They had to undergo a course of instruction which even in classical times consisted only in learning the sacred (magical) formulae and ritualistic practices, and in the mechanical rote-learning of the orally transmitted Vedas under the tutelage of a freely chosen Brahmanical teacher who recited the classical works word for word. This kind of preparation, externally a purely literary schooling of priests, contained vestiges of ancient magical asceticism, which permit us to recognize the origin of the Brahmins out of the primeval magicians.

The general stages in the development of the Brahmins into a caste is clear, but not its causes. Obviously, the priesthood of the Vedic period was not a closed hereditary status group even though the clan charisma of certain priestly sibs was established in the eyes of the people alongside the personal charisma of the ancient magician. Among the functionally specialized priests the *hotar* or fire priest, played the chief role in cult practices. The historical ascendancy of the Brahmins seems to have several reasons. Perhaps the older assumption holds—that the increasingly stereotyped cult practices and magical formulae made the master of sacrificial ceremonies, that is, the Brahmin, more and more the decisive leader. The main cause, however, may have been the increasing significance of family priests of nobles and princes as opposed to those administering the community sacrifice.² This would suggest, if this modern assumption is correct, the diminishing importance of the military association in contrast to that of the prince and his vassals. The magicians had invaded the circles of ancient priestly nobles and, finally, had taken over their legacy.

The ascent of the Brahmins from magical “family chaplaincy” explains why the development of priestly “office” remained quite alien to the Hindu priesthood. Their position represents a specialized development from the universally diffused guild organization as of magicians and their development into a hereditary caste with ever-rising status claims. At the same time, the de-

velopment was a triumph of "knowledge" (or magically effective formulae) over the merely empirical "craft" of the ancient priests. At any rate, the very power of the Brahmins is connected with the increasing significance of magic in all spheres of life.

The school of the Atharava Veda,⁴ with its collection of specifically magical formulae, demanded that the princely house chaplains be taken always from their midst. Astrology and other specific forms of Brahmanical knowledge originated in this school. There are sufficient indications in the law books to prove that magic did not triumph in all spheres of life without a struggle. It was consummated only during the course of the Brahmins' ascent to power. A king's triumph in battle, as well as other successes in life were thought to depend upon successful sorcery. Failure was ascribed to the family priest or to the actor's own ritual offenses.

Since the knowledge of the Brahmins was secret, the monopoly of education by their own progeny resulted automatically. Thus, alongside educational qualification for the priesthood there appeared qualification by birth. The *decapaya* (a part of the sacrifice) required genealogical proof that the ancestors of the officiating priests had been soma drinkers for ten generations. Presumably their merits were meditated upon during the sacrifice.

Only in obscure residua did the old conception survive which based Brahman quality upon personal charisma. The novice (*bramacarin*—student Brahman) was still subjected to the severe regulation of life characteristic of magical asceticism. Particularly, sexual and economic asceticism were required. According to ancient conceptions the novice had to live chastely and by mendicancy. The teacher, by magical means, "made" a Brahman out of the disciple—originally irrespective of his descent. The decisive source of power of the full Brahman was his learning of the Vedas, a learning which was viewed as peculiarly charismatic. A Brahman reproached because he was born of a Shudra woman answered his opponent by proposing a fire ordeal to decide who had the greater Vedic knowledge.⁵ After completing his education and the appropriate ceremonies, the Brahman was expected to establish a household, become a *grishastha*. He now became an active Brahman—if he engaged at all in professional work and did not remain a rentier or take up one of the permissible emergency pursuits.

Brahmanical activities consisted of sacrifice and instruction. Brahmins were economically bound so rigidly and visibly by etiquette that they could not use their personal services to earn their livelihoods in the manner of a vocation. The Brahmin accepted only gifts (*dakshina*), not pay. The giving of gifts for the use of their services was, of course, a ritualistic duty. Sacrifice without gifts brought evil enchantment; moreover, his magical power enabled the Brahmin to avenge severely the denial of gifts by curses or intentional ritualistic errors in the performance of the sacrifice, bringing misfortune to the lord of the sacrifice. Righteous vengeance was actually developed into a methodical procedure. The minimum value of gifts was stipulated and unfair competition among Brahmins prohibited. It was permissible, and under certain conditions prescribed for the Brahmin to inquire in advance as to the size of the intended gift. Their tremendous magical power permitted the Brahmins—in A. Weber's expression—"true orgies of covetousness." We are reminded of the well-known passage in Goethe's *Faust* (concerning the stomach of the church) when we read the principle that nothing can harm the Brahmin's belly. It has, however, only ritualistic significance. A Brahmin could atone by simple means for any or almost any offense against dietary ritual.⁶

The social and economic privileges of the Brahmins were unsurpassed by those of any other priesthood. Even the excrement of a Brahmin could have religious meaning as a divination means. The principle of *ajucyata*—forbidding the oppression of a Brahmin—included, among other things, that a judge must never adjudicate in favor of a non-Brahmin against a Brahmin; the *arca* (respect) due to a Brahmin or at least the Brahmin's claim to respect was higher than a king's.

The peculiarities of the Brahmins as a religious status group will be discussed below (see Part II). Here we are concerned only with the economic advantages that accompanied the specific caste claims for *danam*, gifts. The classical form of compensation on the part of distinguished lords consisted in land grants, cattle, rents dependent on land or tax yields, money, jewelry, and precious objects in that order. At least according to Brahmanical theory the right to receive land grants was a monopoly of the Brahmin caste and its most important economic privilege. The innumerable inscriptions concerning prebendal foundations (the majority of all preserved Indian inscriptions) prove that actually the typical, full-caste Brahmin of the Indian Middle Ages was a hereditary prebendary.

The typical, and originally the highest station of the Brahman, however, was and remained *purohita* (house chaplain) of one or several princes.⁷ Thus, he was the spiritual director of the prince in personal and political affairs. Upon this position the "bread of Brahmanhood," as it was called, depended. From it was derived the political and social power of the caste. A king without a *purohita* could hardly be a full king; similarly, a Brahman without a king could hardly be a full Brahman. To this day, the power of the Brahman rests more upon his position as father confessor, and his indispensability for the many family ceremonies of a distinguished household than upon the almost negligible caste organization per se.

In their role as house priests, the Brahmans imposed upon ambitious castes certain features of the social order (sib and marriage system). This did not result from any decision by some authoritative organ of their caste. Economically the place of the Brahmanical house priest was somewhat similar to that of our "house physician." It was a principle that one should not, without need, exchange a priest once he had been used—according to ancient sources, at least not within the same year. This is matched by the protection of the *jajmani* (patronage) relation against the competition of other Brahmans through strict etiquette. This is similar to the behavior of our house physicians who commonly adhere to such formalities in the interest of their status situation, and to the damage of the patient. This voluntary patronage relation substitutes for the dioceses of a hierarchically organized church. Thus, the total position of the Brahman has remained similar to that of the ancient sorcerer and medicine man.

When the Brahman sees the son of his son, he is expected to retire from the household and become a forest dweller. As a forest dweller, he is able through ascetic exercises to achieve the miraculous power of a magician and the power to enchant deities and men. Thus he concludes his life as an apotheosized "superman." This caste duty, too, a caste duty which today is essentially theoretical, is a survival of the magicians' organization by age classes.

As a rule, distinguished Brahmans never become permanent employees of a congregation or parish. Hindu religion has no "congregation." Moreover, high-caste Brahmans never become the hired priests of Hindu sects or village associations. Brahmans often serve as Vishnu priests, and also perform lowly services

in temples—for instance, in well-paid positions of the Vallabhakhari sect and with the Gujarat-Yajurvedis. But when they do they always incur some degradation. As we shall see later, the relation between Hindu sect members and priests or mystagogues is very different from that of an occidental sect with its employed *ministry*. No high-caste Brahman is or was gladly the “servant” of a community like a Shudra. Even to accept a position as temple priest could, under certain conditions, strongly degrade him. These facts are partially correlated with the social peculiarity of Brahmanhood as a sorcerers’ caste, partially with the feudal structure of Indian society, and partially, however, with the position held by priests in tribes and village communities before Hinduization.

The cult practitioner belonged, in general, simply to the hereditary “establishment” of the village—like the *mullah* and all sorts of present-day temple servants.⁸ The single pariah tribes which gradually turned into Hindu castes not only had deities of their own, en masse, but also their own priests who became caste gods and caste priests. The artisan castes, who were interspersed among other castes, have with great stubbornness continued to insist on exclusive service by members of their own caste in opposition to the Brahmans. The Kammalars, for example, may serve in place of many others which the census reports discover in present-day India. These skilled metal-wood- and stone-workers claim to stem from the artisan god Visvakarma. Upon the call of kings they dispersed widely to Burma, Ceylon, Java and claimed the ranks of priests and also that of newly arrived itinerant Brahmans. As magical artisans as well, they obviously served other castes as *gurus*, ministering to the individual: “The Kamalar is everybody’s *guru*.”⁹ Tribal castes, living in separate villages, regularly retained their traditional priests. The Brahmans won influence over these tribal priests essentially through their superior education, particularly their astrological learning which was beyond the competition of village and caste priests.

To the Brahmans, of course, such priests were completely degraded, insofar as they accepted their existence at all—self-evidently for all impure castes and objectionable in the case of pure castes. Occasionally, as we saw, tribal priests serving ruling sibs won recognition as Brahmans, though usually as socially declassed Brahmans. It is not our purpose here to pursue the

extensive social differentiation of Brahmans which resulted from this, and from the declassing of Brahmans serving despised castes.¹⁰ Nor shall we examine the caste rank of the numerous Brahmans, today the majority, who have changed their callings. Our concern is only the close connection between the special position of the Brahmans and that of the kings and noble castes, the Kshatriyas.

2. The Kshatriyas

THE ancient Indian warlord of the Vedas is *primus inter pares* among the *maghavan* who suggest somewhat the nobles of *Phocaea*. In classical times these gentes were replaced by the Kshatriya caste which later substantially disappeared.

In the oldest sources we discern the dawn beginnings of military organization in India. We find castle-dwelling kings of the Homeric type with their sibs and followings (king's men). The universally diffused charismatic heroism in the manner of the Nordic Berserks and the Israelite Moshuahs, the charismatic "Degen" of charismatic warrior chieftains—all these belonged to the past and only traces of them survived in epic times.

The ancient, universally diffused organization of warriors as a brotherhood of young men, the systematic, magical hero-asceticism of boys, the stages in the warrior novitiate, initiation of the *ephebes* into the phratry of bachelors living in collective economy with captured girls in long houses, the retirement of ex-service (militia) men into marriage and domesticity, the reservations made for elders (in Japan, *inkyō*) unable to serve—all these have vanished. Indeed, vestiges survive of the ancient charismatic warrior probation and of the principle that a man disqualified for the armed forces remains a "woman," i.e., deprived of political rights. They survive in the highly important *upanayana* ceremonies (ancient initiation rites) which the boys of a "twice-born" caste—thus far Shudras (like women)—had to undergo before securing membership status. But the ceremony itself, completed at a very early age, was a vestige comparable to our "confirmation."

The Kshatriya of classical literature lacked the special character of our medieval knighthood. Their social position rested on sib and clan charisma and not on a feudal hierarchy. This was true even before the crystallization of caste forms. The

Kshatriyas were and remained kings, subkings, and in the lowest stratum, village notables with special economic privileges.

Classical sources ascribe to the Kshatriyas the function of "protecting" the population politically and militarily. The king not furnishing protection for his subjects from thieves and robbers is held liable for damages done to them. According to the sources, each officer, including the tax-farmer of later kingdoms, had the same duty of protection and eventual restitution for any damages done to a certain district. (The size of the district varied with the size of its central community.) So far, this caste duty grew out of experience. Indeed, it contained, as some further evidence indicates, vestiges of the ancient conception of the charismatic role of the king. The king defeated in battle was responsible for the sins of his subjects as well as his own. The king who spoke false justice was magically burdened with the sins of the intentionally or accidentally injured party—a more stringent analogy to the conception underlying the *Urteilschelte* in Germanic law. That king is good whose subjects are prosperous and experience no famine. Famine was always a sign of magical offense or the charismatic insufficiency of the ruler. In case of need, the king does penance. The people may and should get rid of a king found permanently divested of his charisma.

Out of these charismatic conceptions in the great kingdoms of the Indian Middle Ages there easily developed the theory of patriarchal "welfare" and "protection." However, it was eclipsed by the transformation of hero-charisma into "vocational" duty of an estate of knights.

Warfare is the *dharma* of the Kshatriyas in classical and medieval sources. Except for the intermissions brought by the universal monarchies, war was as ever-present in India as between the ancient city-states. Only when a king had conquered all others was he entitled to the great horse sacrifice which brought the fortunate, officiating Brahmans 100,000 cattle. This occurred with approximately the frequency with which the Janus temple in Rome was closed. The celebration is historically ascertained.

That a king should ever fail to consider the subjugation of his neighbors by force or fraud remained inconceivable to secular and religious Hindu literature. When the founder of the Mahratt empire failed to conduct war for one year, the neighboring lords considered it a sure indication that he was mortally ill. In

the Kshatriya's militaristic code, death in bed was not only considered dishonorable but a sin against caste *dharma*. When a Kshatriya felt his powers weaken he was expected to seek death in battle.

According to legend the old Kshatriyas were wiped off the face of the earth, vengeance for their enmity toward the Brahmans. There is certainly a grain of truth in this as in the legend of the struggle of Vievamithras against Vaishltha. The ancient Kshatriyas, about the time of Buddha (sixth century B.C.), were a highly educated estate of urban- and castle-dwelling nobles, comparable, in this regard, to the knighthood of Provence in the early Middle Ages. They were later displaced by the Rajputs. The Rajputs, partly stemming from what is today Rajputana and Southern Oudh, rose in about the eighth century to overlordship and spread through the kingdoms as a typical warrior stratum. Many are illiterate to this day. They correspond to later tribes who enter the caste order by way of service to the great kings as paid knights or mercenaries.¹¹ The Rajputs formed by far the most distinguished tribe among those supplying mercenaries and were most completely Hinduized in the manner of the Kshatriyas.

The ancient Kshatriyas gentes rivaled the Brahmans in education and were, as we shall see, the supporters of anti-Brahmanical salvation religions (such as Buddhism). The Rajputs, on the other hand, had to submit to the superior Brahmanical education and, in common with patrimonial kinship, supported the Hindu restoration. The peculiar, unclassical segregation of the Rajputs into exogamous subdivisions indicates their derivation from a tribe of mercenary knights. No family tree extends further back than the fifth century and 90 per cent are settled in North India, especially the Northwest.

The political feudalism which prevailed in Rajputana until modern times corresponded very closely to the type reported in classical times. The Raja had the best land as a desmene (Persian, Khalsa). The vassals enfeoffed with prerogatives also received land grants. They had to render knightly pay escheatage. The Raja had the right (1) to tax part of the harvest yield; (2) to dispose of wasteland—which was important for it involved rights to timber, deforestation, and hereditary property rights for payment of a woodcutting tax and the assumption of rent obligations payable in lump sums; (3) to mining, treasure-

seeking, and other similar regalia; and (4) to collect fines for punishments. All these economic rights could, in part, also be enforced.

As a rule, in India, in accordance with the universal principle of clan charisma, only sib and clan members of the ruling clan tended to be enforced; the system was not based upon a personal relation of trust between sib strangers. In early times enforcement did not comprise seignorial but only economic and personal rights of political origin. The Kshatriyas were royal sibs, not feudal landlords.

In the Dravidic states the king, in each village, had a royal hide (*majha*) which was paralleled by the tax-exempt priestly hide* (*pahoor*). As his power increased the king installed his representative, *mahia*, beside or in place of the old village chieftain (*munla*). The charismatically privileged (*dhuinhar*) families which supplied these village chiefs had tax-free land, while the other land lots (*khunt*) had become taxable and were considered "the king's land."¹² The conquerors essentially retained this arrangement and generally feudalized it. In the Middle Ages elements of a truly feudal structure are to be found in most parts of India, particularly in the west—often in quite occidental form. The Rajas had coats of arms.¹³ There were enfeoffments with knightly ceremonies.¹⁴ But the law books knew no true seignorial rights in the villages. These were a product, not of feudalization, but of later prebendalization of political authority.

Many times under the great kings high military command posts were combined with territorial fiefs, which were turned into hereditary economic rights.¹⁵ After the death of a vassal in combat his position as leader of the respective troops was given to someone else. The incumbent received several villages as hereditary fief of fallowland. So, too, with high political posts.¹⁶ Among the great political fief-holders, royal descent or relationship¹⁷ was the rule, not, however, without exception.¹⁸ The prerogatives of princes like those of vassals were considered alienable to a large degree.¹⁹ Constant feuds occurred over large areas of India. Particularly in the South epitaphs, typically, are for knights who fell in battle against cattle-thieves, and therefore entered heaven.²⁰

What was the characteristic derivation of those elements of

* We read *Priesterhufe* rather than *Priesterstufe*. (Eds.)

the Rajput caste most representative of older traditions? The question can best be answered by pointing to the political overlords such as petty princes, enfeoffed knights, office nobles, or landlords with political rights and duties. These nobles were never pure scribes, but an estate of politico-military fief-holders of quite a different type, especially including military prebendaries to be discussed presently. The changes in Indian organization and administration, particularly military, are bound up in this.

The army of the epics and of the oldest historical sources (Megasthenes and Arrian) is similar, though at a more advanced stage than the Homeric army. Heroes (*curah*) with their followings (*arugah*) are the champions, duelling frequently. The leaders of army divisions are not "officers" or "strategists" but particularly good warriors qualified through charismatic heroism. The army was indeed organized for battle; however, combat took place without order. The heroes rushed to attack the most worthy opponents. In the epics the death of the leader automatically signified the defeat of his army.

Alongside the king's followings, there were those warriors (such as the office nobles of kings) who could not equip themselves with weapons and chariots, and as well paid warriors of the prince also in peacetime received their wages from the prince. If such paid warriors died, their widows remained in the care of the king. According to Arrian, these warriors, who provided their own weapons, ranked below the nobles and priests but were separated from the peasants.

In addition to organization by phratries, as found in Homer, there appeared already purely tactical divisions of 10, 100, 1,000. Elephants and chariots were in typical numerical relation to cavalry and infantry. The armed forces were soon rationally organized, staffed by officers, and supplied and equipped increasingly out of kingly magazines. The army soon lost all traces of a people's militia or a knights' summons.

Kingly administration became patrimonial and bureaucratic. On the one hand, it developed a regulated hierarchical order of officials with local and functional competences and appeals; on the other hand, however, administrative and court offices were not kept separate and the jurisdictional spheres of a bewildering manifold of offices were fluid, indeterminate, irrational, and subject to chance influences.²¹

As shown by inscriptions, an elaborate filing system developed as early as the first dynasty of great kings (that of the Maurya, third and fourth centuries B.C.).²² As is well known from its innumerable edicts, in the administration of the great Buddhist king Ashoka, an incredible love of writing developed.²³ In a fashion characteristic of patrimonial bureaucracies, the regents of state territories were relatives. The *Arthashastra* ("political science") of the Kautiliya, edited by Chanaukya,²⁴ and ascribed to a minister of the great Maurya king, Chandragupta, supplements this picture. Comprehensive statistics were to form the basis of administrations. All inhabitants were to be registered by caste, sib, calling, possessions, and income. The inhabitants were to be required to have passports and were to be controlled throughout their entire lives. For fiscal authorities the greatest danger to the state, next to subversion, was thought to be impairment of the "will to work"; therefore, theatres and musical bands in the country, alcohol trade and inns everywhere were to be restricted. And the spies of the administration were to report upon the most intimate private life of the subjects.

The king engaged in trade, and his administration, by means of market police, controlled prices. The Raja still retains trading monopolies: for saffron in Kashmir, precious stones in South India, horses in the West, weapons and fine textiles in the East, elephants throughout India. In contrast to the conditions presupposed by the Jatskas, price controls were an element of royal political finance. Furthermore, all conceivable tax sources were exploited—from taxes on mistresses whom the king kept for the needs of travelling merchants to money fines on burgers whom the king, according to the author's advice, would entice to commit punishable offenses by means of agent provocateurs.

In contrast to Buddhist and other pious sectarian kings, Hindu kings confined the interests of administration essentially to two objectives: the raising of manpower for the army and tax collection. Particularly under the Moguls, the administration increasingly sought to secure both objectives by means of stipulation of taxes in lump sums and prebendalization. A military prebendary assumed the obligation of forming a definite contingent. For this purpose, they were leased the respective tax yields for soldier's pay, rations, and other necessities. This led to the establishment of *Jagir*-prebends which were obviously modeled after the ancient temple and Brahmanical prebends. When invested

with the right of disposition of wasteland, the Jagirdar easily turned into a landlord even though the origin of the right was politico-military. There were military fiefs similar to the Roman military border fief, the *Ghahata*. Even after 1000 A.D. officials derived their livelihoods essentially from the royal magazines,²⁵ and the money economy made headway in public finance by fits and starts and, as in the Middle East, with the assistance of private capital.

The king gathered his taxes by farming out their collection or leasing them as a prebend for payment of fixed lump sums. The tax farmers developed into a class of landlords known as *Zamin-dari* (Bengal) and *Talukdari* (particularly in Oudh). They became true landlords only when the British administration held them liable for the tax assessment, treating them for this reason as "proprietors." If one examines the list of their claims under the Mogul rule, their rights originally derive from the custom of holding the guarantors of military and financial contributions of the district responsible for the rest of the administration, including the administration of justice, the cost of which they had to advance.

Also in the occidental state at the beginning of modern times there appeared tax farming and the commissioning of entrepreneurs with army recruitment—entrepreneurs to whom finance had largely to be entrusted. In India, however, under the great kingdoms those central institutions failed to develop which in the West allowed the princes gradually to take back military and financial administration into their own hands. The Mahrattas were the only ones to re-introduce, in principle, an independent fiscal economy and precisely for this reason their administrative technique was superior to that of the Moguls. The rule of the Mahrattas was simply, at least in intent, that of a national dynasty while the foreign dominions remained more completely dependent upon middlemen. The Mahrattas, therefore, used the Brahman caste for all administrative purposes, including the military; in other regimes, in general, the lower castes of scribes competed with the Brahmans. Islam especially utilized castes of scribes in opposition to the Brahmans.

This phase of Indian administrative history led to the development of various prebends en masse. Above all, it led to the emergence of a stratum of landlords which developed out of tax farming and military prebendalization. The tax farmers

and military prebendaries had to assume the administrative costs of their districts and to guarantee all military and financial contributions. If successful, these landlords had a free hand and little fear of intervention by central power. Their copyholds were as good as completely "*mediatized*" (annexed, appropriated).

A peculiar Indian development occurred in the elaboration of a whole series of graduated rents based upon the tax duties of the peasants and payable out of the produce of the land. Above the peasant proper, the actual cultivator of the land, was one or, as a rule, a community of land renters who as proprietors of the land were held liable by the authorities for the tax levy. However, between these proprietors and the authorities there was usually a middleman—the Zamindar or Talukdar—who laid claim either to a share of the rent (in the Northeast often 10 per cent of the tax levy) or to seigniorial rights.

The Northeast pattern resulted from the restriction of profits for this category of middleman tax farmers to a 10 per cent quota of all tax income. This kind of regulation is also found in the Middle East.

To complicate matters, at times a new type of infeudated middleman developed beside the old, and these were invested by "birth" with rights to rent. Or again, there appeared landlords whose rights were based on the fact that they "bought" the village by assuming the obligation of paying tax arrears. Furthermore, hereditary village chiefs sometimes advanced rent claims which gave them a kind of landlord character.

Since the eighteenth century the Mahrattas regime systematically carried out the quota allocation of tax yields to single prebendaries which had precedence over the state which retained the rest. In a fashion similar to the infeudation policy of the Normans, they made certain that no prebendary received his income solely from his own bailiwick, but obtained at least part of his income from others.

The special character of the social strata, resting on this economic basis, was determined by its origin and nature. The occidental *seigneurie*, like the oriental Indian, developed through the disintegration of the central authority of the patrimonial state power—the disintegration of the Carolingian Empire in the Occident, the disintegration of the power of the Caliphs²⁰ and the Maharadja or Great Moguls in India. In the Carolingian

Empire, however, the new stratum developed on the basis of a rural subsistence economy. Through oath-bound vassalage, patterned after the war following, this stratum of lords was joined to the king and interposed itself between the freemen and the king. Feudal relations were also to be found in India, but they were not decisive for the formation either of a nobility or land-lordism.

In India, as in the Orient generally, a characteristic seignioriness developed rather out of tax farming and the military and tax prebends of a far more bureaucratic state. The oriental seignioriness therefore remained in essence, a "prebend" and did not become a "fief"; not feudalization, but prebendalization of the patrimonial state occurred. The comparable, though undeveloped, occidental parallel is not the medieval fief but the purchase of offices and prebends during the papal seicento or during the days of the French *Noblesse de Robe*. The Indian Rajas, occasionally, also sold tax and political prebends of all kinds. Not only were the historical stages of Indian and European developments different, but a purely military factor is important for the explanation of the different development of East and West. In Europe the horseman was technically the paramount force of feudalism. In India, in spite of their numbers, horsemen were relatively less significant and efficient than the foot soldiers who held a primary role in the armies from Alexander to the Moguls.

The chancery formalities of the Great Mogul states, so far as they are known, are similar to those of the Turkish type and their models, the Caliphate and the Sassanid administrations.* Even before the foreign dominations an extraordinary rationalization of tax collection had led to the penetration of clerical techniques into every phase of political administration. The village scribe, who everywhere had a place alongside the village chief, was the lowest but none the less an important authority in this bureaucracy of scribes. The prebends of the scribes were contested by Brahmanas and others, by distinguished and *parvenu* castes alike. The Mahrattas rule was characterized by a consistent dualism of *deshmukh* (district official) and *patel* (village mayor), both the *deshpandya* and the *kulkurmu* (village calculators) who stood beside them were usually Brahmanas.

* Caliph was the title of Mohammed's theocratic successors. The Sassanids, a dynasty of Persian kings, ruled from 226 to 641 A.D. (Eds.)

The content of the concept *Kshatriya* is unclear. Does it mean "the families of petty kings" or "kighthood"? This, too, must be explained in terms of the political structure of India with its vascillation between fragmentation into innumerable petty kingdoms—originally simple chieftainships—and centralization into patrimonial empires. In military affairs these opposed tendencies may be traced back to epic times for even then, beside the combat of heroes, is to be found the beginnings of a disciplined army. Even at the time of Alexander's invasion this disciplined army was not self-equipped but equipped and supplied out of the king's magazines. The dualism between self-equipped warriors and disciplined soldiers separated from ownership of the means of warfare—one of the most important historical contrasts—persisted and did not even completely disappear under the rule of the Moguls.

The social prestige of self-equipped knights was always different from that of soldiers equipped by the king or a recruiting officer. However, the hiring of mercenaries from all sorts of half-barbarian tribes and the enfeoffment of the more deserving with land and prerogatives since the time of the Rajputs must have made status differences fluid.

Similarly, the vascillation of social structure and political organization created a fluid situation. When the tendency toward feudalization was ascendant the king, as usual, made use of old distinguished secular or priestly nobles; when the tendency toward patrimonialism was ascendant the king appointed lower-class upstarts to positions of political power.

The strength of the noble elements deriving from the ancient chieftainship and war following among the present day Rajputs cannot be ascertained.²⁷ Certainly it is not great. During epochs when patrimonial bureaucratic tendencies were ascendant, tax farmers and office prebendaries were admitted and became landlords added en masse to the ranks of the old nobility. Furthermore, soldiers of fortune and mercenaries, often after a number of generations, laid claim to recognition as *Kshatriyas* as do, even today, a number of half-Hinduized peasant tribes which once provided these soldiers. Since the end of mercenary warfare and the pacification of India the peasant tribes have had to gain their livelihoods through peaceful pursuits.

Certain tribes in the past had built up large empires through conquest. Since the disintegration of these empires and their

conquest by the British they have fallen into a peculiar interstitial situation between "tribe" and "caste." To these in particular belong the Mahratta, a tribe native to the northwest coast. The tribal name (*Maharatha*—great warrior) is to be found in inscriptions before our chronology. Hiuen Tsang extols their chivalrous method of warfare in his travel descriptions. Even at that time they fought rank-and-file although a residue of heroic ecstasy appears in the intoxicatory incitement of men and elephants before the battle.

Under Islamic rule this stratum's castle fiefs and service as soldier knights were continued, and, eventually, they rose in revolt against the Great Moguls, establishing during the eighteenth century the last national Hindu regime in India. The "nobles" (*assal*) i.e., former warriors, claimed Kshatriya rank and a mixture with Rajput families had clearly taken place. Ritualistic and sib organizations were established in essentially Hindu manner, good (*deshushth*) Brahmans served as their priests. However, their tribal origin is betrayed in vestiges of the totemic (*devak*-) organization. The peasants (*kunbi*—*Mahratta*) are segregated by status barriers.

The noble rank of such alien tribes of knights was questioned and the claim advanced by tribal soldiers of fortune that they were Kshatriyas was never recognized. The status order of the South Indian Tamils²⁸ at the time of the beginning of our chronology and their Hinduization was as follows: only the immigrant Brahmans were designated as "twice-born" (for they alone wore the holy belt); they were followed by Tamil priests (*Arivars*, ascetics) and noble landlords, the *Ulavars*, the "lords of the waters" (irrigation) from whose ranks kings and political vassals were recruited; following these were various castes of cattle-breeders and artisans; finally, as fifth estate, the *Padaiaichia*, soldiers. Each stratum was segregated from the others. Later Brahmanical classification placed the traders above the *Vellalars* (the old *Ulavars*) who in the meantime had become "rusticated." Naturally, here, as elsewhere, the Brahmans refused to class professional soldiers, provisioned by the king, as "twice-born" castes.

The Khati may illustrate the fate of such ancient "warrior" tribes (actually often robbers and cattle-thieves). They possessed strong castles in Sindh. Since their expulsion they have settled in Ahmadabad, taking up occupations as landlords

(*Talukdari*) and peasants. They are sun worshipers, though utilizing Brahmans as priests, with a centralized organization. Like old plebeian tribes of professional soldiers they are relatively unstable in occupational pursuits. The Khatriis of Bombay originally were a warrior caste claiming Kshatriya rank. Even today they claim the right to the holy belt but have become cotton-weavers. The old soldier and robber tribe of the Halepaika of Bombay since the fall of the Dravidian Empire have become distillers of palm oil.

The position of nonmilitary office-holders remained problematical. Pure tax farmers, *Zamindari*, were recruited from various castes by the moguls and secured no special caste rank of their own. Some of the old office prebendaries fared better insofar as lower-ranking people at all obtained rank equivalent to the Brahmans or Rajputs. The type of administration determined which groups were able to advance. Finally, of course, the rank and status ascent of the quite immilitary bureaucratic scribes of the great kingdoms is contested to this very day.

The patrimonial origin of the officialdom is expressed in the name *Amatya* (originally meaning "house companion"). Indian kings, at least, seem not to have employed unfree officials, as was done in the Middle East. The status pride of such free officials was expressed in the assumption that the official holds his position "through friendly agreement with his king and lord," a formula found in an inscription for the empire of the western Chalukya Dynasty of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries.²⁹ The bulk of the officials, however, belonged to the *britya*, including harem watchmen and poor soldier mercenaries.

In the course of time only the social rank of the official's claims of origin was changed. Patrimonialism broke the old monopoly of offices by the knighthood. The great kings, first of the Maurya—later of the Gupta—Dynasty (the first since the fourth century B.C., the second since the fourth century A.D.) ruled the land by means of officials drawn from the Shudra castes. Brahmanical literature attributes this to the opening of the Kali-epoch. It corresponds, however, to the nature of patrimonial states everywhere and particularly to oriental patriarchalism.

Surely the old Kshatriya caste had considered enfeoffment with political power its special monopoly. The caste was not able to retain its monopoly, however, and indeed it helped work

the decomposition of the caste. The patrimonial state utilized as officials not only Brahmans but scribes of other castes. Without binding itself to any single status group, the state bestowed prebends, including tax-collection, on civil (*bürgerliche*) tax farmers, army recruitment on *condottieri*. In the form of the Jagirdar, Talukdar, and Zamindar the state created tax prebendiares of all sorts and endowed them with political power. The state freed itself from dependence on any single stratum. In fact the kings themselves were often merely fortunate *parvenus*. Monarchs appeared who described themselves as the sprouts of Brahman's feet (hence as Shudras).

According to strict theory not even royal descent could make a nobleman out of a Shudra. Recently the Rajbansi caste in Bengal excommunicated a member because he had given his daughter in marriage to a member of a caste of cooks who had a Raja ancestor.

As a rule political authority is a preponderant advantage in the competition for rank. Hence today unmilitary office nobles compete for caste rank with the Rajputs and military nobles generally. This is particularly true of the great caste of scribes as, for example, the purely bureaucratic Kayasth in Bengal and the semi-bureaucratic military prebendaries, the Prabhu—a small group only found in Bombay. The Prabhu were once a military class enfeoffed since the rule of the Gupta with local administrative duties (tax-collection, documents and records, military administration). They have retained their position for a very long time.

In Bengal there were only a few rural Rajput families. Only one of the well-known families appears to belong to them without doubt. Since the Sena dynasty the territory of Bengal has been organized in patrimonial bureaucratic fashion. The Kayasth—a caste of scribes also appearing in other regions—were still viewed as pure Shudras in the Vellala Charita (sixteenth century). Now the Kayasth in Bengal claim to be Kshatriyas of a higher rank than the Rajputs.

The occupational composition of these castes of officials with literary education differs greatly from that of the Rajputs and other old soldier castes, who show an especially high rate of illiteracy. At present very few Rajputs are found in modern political and private-economic administration in which Brah-

mans and scribes play an important role. The same holds for advocacy, the press, and the "learned" professions.

In Calcutta 30 per cent of the Kayasths are clerks. The Brahmans and Kayastha vie for first place among the clerks, lawyers, doctors, journalists, and engineers. In Bombay Province 74 per cent of the Rajputs and 92 per cent of the Mahrattas are engaged in agriculture, but only 2 per cent and 3/10 of 1 per cent respectively are to be found in political administration, and 8/10 of 1 per cent and 2/100 of 1 per cent respectively in the learned professions. That is about the same percentage as the despised peasant caste of the Kuli in Gujarat. There, seven per cent of the Brahmans and 27 per cent of the Prabhus are engaged in administration and 22 and 18 per cent respectively in the learned professions. Recruits for administration and the learned professions are also drawn from the trading caste of the Lohars with 5-8/10 per cent and 27 per cent respectively. Only rarely does a Rajput become a shopkeeper, a Mahratta almost never. To this day the Mahratta caste stands for love of feudal pomp and leisure.

The caste rank of the Kayasth is constantly and passionately contested, particularly by the old Bengal doctors' caste, the Baidya, which claims higher rank because it practices the full Upanayam ceremony and feels entitled to read the Vedas. The Kayasth, for their part, insist that the Baidya surreptitiously obtained the right to wear the holy belt only a hundred years ago through the help of bribed Brahmans. Both parties may well be historically right. The Kayasth undoubtedly were Shudras. On the other hand, despite the great age of medicine as a special science in India, the physician's castes, at best, could have had Vaishya rank like other castes of the old guild association (*mahajan*). Today the Baidyas and similar castes in other regions often claim higher rank than the Rajputs because the Rajputs do not consider it absolutely degrading under certain circumstances to lay a hand on the plough. The Baidya can back their own rank claims by pointing to the fact that the Sena Dynasty developed out of their caste.

All in all, the present castes recognized as having more or less undisputed Kshatriya rank are quite mixed in character and bear the traces of the historical changes which Hinduism has undergone politically since the rise of clerical administration. Even more problematic was and is the situation of the third caste of classical teaching, the Vaishya.

3. *The Vaishyas*

AS THEY appear in classical learning the Vaishyas suggest somewhat our stratum of free commoners. Viewed negatively, i.e., in contrast to the higher castes, the Vaishyas lacked the ritualistic, social, and economic privileges of a priestly and lay nobility. Viewed from below, in contrast to the Shudra, the most important privilege of the Vaishyas—though it is never expressly mentioned—was their right to own land, a right clearly denied to the Shudras. In the Vedas the word *vica* is used in the sense of “people,” “subjects” (of the ruler).

In classical sources the Vaishya is, first, a peasant. Even in the law books, however, the loaning of money for interest, and trade are recognized as permissible occupations for this class. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that in classical times a rigid social distinction was drawn between animal husbandry and tillage. Only the former is a permissible emergency occupation for a Brahman. This agrees with ancient, widely-held views. Almost everywhere animal husbandry was man’s work; primitive tillage was woman’s or slave’s work.

In post-classical times and at present the conception of the Vaishya as a “peasant” has completely vanished. Even in early historical times trade was held to be the true occupation of the Vaishya, Vaishya and *vanik* (trader) being considered identical. A caste claiming Vaishya rank today seeks to prove that it always was a trader caste.

The removal of the peasantry from status equality with urban propertied and income groups probably was determined by a number of factors. Feudalization was doubtless the first, patrimonial fiscalization and prebendalization the second. Even in classical times the Vaishya were held to exist in order to be “consumed” by the higher estates. In the Middle Ages the Vaishya was of interest to the higher estates only as a taxpayer.

Medieval India was a land of villages. The size of a kingdom was stated in terms of the numbers of its villages, that is to say, tax units. In later times they were stated in *lakhs*—rent units based upon tax assessment. The land tax was and remains the absolutely decisive source of finance and the most important object of enfeoffment and prebend formation.

In classical times the king was called the “taker of the sixth part,” for one-sixth of the harvest, the ancient traditional land tax, was considered reasonable. Actually the tax had been raised

to that level and—contrary to old doctrine—reached such heights that the theory developed ascribing land monopoly to the king. In Bengal and some South Indian conquest territories this probably approached reality.

We owe to B. H. Baden-Powell the comprehensive investigation of the Indian village. As sources for his investigation he utilized the British tax assessment. For the rest, the inscriptions on monuments and literary sources, throw only scanty light on the past of the Indian peasant. However, since the time of the Mogul rule, and often earlier, fiscal interest was decisive for the position of the peasants with respect to others. Since that time the (primarily administrative) issue has been: Who is to assume the tax liability?

When each field is separately assessed and each village land-owner is liable for the tax on his property the village is a *Ryotvari* or *Raiyatvari* village. In this case there is no landlord. Instead, the ancient clan charismatic village head (*patel*) is considered to be a government official invested with great authority; and he gathers the taxes. In central India the *patel* holds the tax-free and inheritable Watan land as a kind of hereditary fief, as a village may. The *patel* lives in a centrally located, often fortified residence. A village “*mark*” (tract of land) beyond the cultivated acreage does not exist today; this land belongs to the state, which alone can grant the right of settlement on it.

Conditions are different when a circle of owners has joint liability to the state for the tax levy payable as a lump sum (*jama*). Such a circle of proprietors often has a *panchayat* as a representative organ and is authorized to issue administrative decrees concerning the villagers and the village *mark*, the wasteland. The *panchayat* leases for rent the fields of the village to peasants, village craftsmen, and village traders. At its own discretion the *panchayat* partitions the wasteland and separates and distributes “*Sir*” land (desmesne land) from the village *mark* among the respective participants and the village community as a whole and possibly permits temporary leases of the latter. In such a village there is no *patel* with a paramount position based on charismatic prerogatives; rather a *lambardar* (administrator) may represent the common interests of the villagers against the fiscal authorities. Land allotments and corresponding tax obligations may be distributed among the participants as hereditary *quctas* (*patti*). Hence such villages are called *patti-*

dari, or according to other standards (particularly the individual owner's ability to pay), *bhaiachara* villages.

Baden-Powell rightly assumes that *pattidari* villages developed out of landlord's estate. *Zamindari* villages are owned by single lords and are often found today. Even the Kantaliya Arthacastra cited above, contains the advice to mortgage the wasteland to an available guarantor of the tax levy. The authenticity of the statement is assured for the Raja's economic charges—though not his strictly political rights—were divisible and inscriptions frequently report donations of villages at definite quotas (*vritti*) to a plurality of Brahmans.

Baden-Powell,³⁰ however, assumes the same origin for the *bhaiachara* villages, except that the quotas presumably have disappeared. This assumption is not convincing, however, for to this day tax assessments may lead to the deliberate transmutation of *raiya*³¹ villages into *bhaiachara* villages with joint tax liability and jurisdiction over the village *mark*.

We owe to Baden-Powell the sharp distinctions between different types of modern village communities. Moreover, he brought into clear focus the retention of the sib and phratry (he says "clan") as the basis of the land leases of the overlords. He also called attention to the significance of land surpluses in early times for the structure of the village. The following propositions of Baden-Powell suggest analogy to other Asiatic areas and will be retained: (1) Completely collective tillage (agrarian communism) of villages was not the primeval structure of rural India. In any case it was not of importance for the later structure of agrarian society. (2) The tribe (and possibly its subdivision, the military association of the phratry) considered itself to be possessor of the occupied territory and repulsed attacks on it. (3) The ancient Indian village did not have a village "common"—at least not necessarily—and rights to the "common" were not integral to the peasant's holdings in the European sense. This resulted from the abundance of land and the persistence of phratry organization. (4) Seigniorial prerogatives based on a feudal structure, similar or equivalent to that of the Occident, have hardly played a role in the structure of agrarian India. The social structure of agrarian India, rather, was determined, on the one hand, by the sib and phratry (clan) community of conquerors, and on the other, by the leases of tax prebends. (5) Clearing of the land, on the one hand, and con-

quest, on the other, constituted the most ancient titles to landholding.

The present-day stratum of land cultivators are called *upri*, "occupants" in official language. Concretely, they are the people who plough the land and pay the rents to the partners of the *pattidari* and *bhaichara* community. Since the British reform laws, they now stand with respect to property relations in a situation analogous to that of Irish tenants since Gladstone's agrarian reforms. Obviously this was not their original situation.

Classical literature, particularly the law books, but also the *Jatakas* and the authors of their time,³² know neither the lord's manor nor the present-day "joint village." Land purchase and semi-tenancy, not on village land, however, are to be found. *Allmende* (pasture land) and village herdsmen are found in North India. Originally the right of preemption of village associates in contrast to outsiders is unquestioned. South Indian villages sometimes join together to form a new community unit.³³ Village communities sometimes receive grants from the king,³⁴ and sometimes they act collectively, for example, as donators with their *panch* representing the community.³⁵ From these facts it is clear that there existed a primary "village community" independent of tax liabilities; it had to exist wherever settlements of conquerors faced the conquered.

The Indian field system could not consist of scattered holdings lying in different fields in the manner of the German system. To be sure, the *pattis* are often dispersed because of differential soil qualities (rotation of plots occurs sporadically) but on the whole the scattered plots are large and do not represent calculable blocks of comparable size. Landholding was determined by the number of ploughs a man owned and hence the land he had to work. Since, initially, there was an abundance of available land, calculation was unnecessary. Water, however, was an economic good, for irrigation purposes and, as Baden-Powell emphasized, anyone who would have taken liberties with it would have met resistance. There were redistributions of land in order to equalize livelihoods. As a result of increasing tax pressure, phenomena similar to those found in Russia occurred. Tax assessment determined the right (and possibly the duty) to land.

Strong, secondary community relations always developed where fertility was based on irrigation. Water shares were doubtlessly apportioned according to costs. Such irrigation projects,

however, could serve as the basis for extensive economic differentiation. To be sure, lake reserves of water and their implements were often established as foundations.

More often, however, rich entrepreneurs individually or jointly constructed them, supplying water for rent. This was the origin of the "water lords" of South India.

An even more important source of property privilege was the "*watan* land,"³⁶ the land of the village chief, priest, accountant, and at times other village servants. Such land was hereditary and later became alienable. Above all, these officials either enjoyed tax freedom or paid only fixed taxes in contrast to the harvest shares of peasants which, in practice, (though not in theory) could be increased. Under the rule of the Maharattas office prebendaries sought, at least in their own villages, to take the *watan* land into their own hands, no matter from what sources they drew their income. It became a point of honor for the socially dominant strata to retain this office prebend in the family. Indeed, the higher the tax-load mounted the more desirable *watan* land became. It was, therefore, much sought-after as a pure investment opportunity by the highest strata of society.

The ancient epics of North India were familiar with the service prebend. Such service prebends varied in size, in terms of the rank of office, from rents of lots to the rents of entire cities. Obviously, the old patrimonial monarchy had sought to prevent *watan* land from turning into hereditary property rights and, in particular, into land-holdings. Later the Maharattas attempted but by no means fully succeeded in preventing the same thing in the South.

Initially, the special quality of *watan* land derived from its role in the status situation of the village chief. More exactly it was land possessed by the charismatically endowed sib of the village chieftain in return for service. There were a considerable number of similar titles attached to the status qualities of the owner. In particular, the complete monopolization of Aryan village lands by the conquerors and the dispossession of the conquered must have established differences, the development of which can no longer be assessed. We do, however, have confirming evidence of titles to land, "the right of Brahman prebends," and especially frequent inscriptions from the Indian Middle Ages stating a right to land possession known as *bhumichchida* which doubtlessly indicates an hereditary land-

holding exempt from arbitrary tax raises. These derived from the status position of the entitled sib and its clan charisma.

Generally the members of the privileged associations ("joint villages") of rent-receiving landlords claim their partnership as a birth right (*mirasi* is translated by Baden-Powell as "birth right") derived from membership in a charismatic (princely) clan. In fact, all land bearing an hereditary title and (possible) fixed rent is technically called "*miras*." The "*mirasi*" quality of possessions was primarily determined by the hereditary status of the sib and later the caste. However, such landlords formed classes which, even when they did the managing themselves, refused as long as possible to lay hand to the plough, thus to avoid the ritualist degradation that occasionally occurred among impoverished Rajputs and other distinguished landowners. In the records of the Indian Middle Ages "village inhabitants" (as an estate obviously not declassified) appear as witnesses, donors, or "rural people" alongside the royal sib, the officials, and urban traders. In such cases we cannot be certain whether the reference is to landlords, genuine peasants, or some middle group. It is most probable³⁷ that as a rule they were landlords. While generally excellent in their presentation of the various castes, the census reports are unclear on this point. Naturally, the differences among the rural strata are at present quite fluid. Two groups of villagers obviously have best maintained their place as "independent" peasants (in the German sense):* the Khumbi in the West and North and the Vellalar in the South. The first appeared primarily in areas where the structure of rural society was basically determined by military rather than financial differentiation—usually the separation of knights and professional soldiers from peasants. As is usual in such cases, social differentiation was essentially less rigid.³⁸

The Vellalar, however, represent the old class (previously mentioned) of freemen (landlords) who were "rusticated" under patrimonialism and the domination of the soldier army, and who were degraded in caste rank after the consummation of the Hindu system. From both castes are recruited the most efficient and businesslike cultivators of India; the Khumbis in particular appear quite receptive to modern economic methods; for example, they are inclined to invest their savings in factories and securities.

* "Self-employed" persons; in this case, owner-operators. (*Eds.*)

In general, among the relatively high-ranking rural castes are to be found a number of Hinduized tribes, such as the Jat, Gujar, Koch. Some, extremes of settled landowners, derive from castes of former professional soldiers; the scattered remainders represent nonnoble landlords who are considered relatively distinguished.

To some extent, in times of continuous feuds the free peasants through commendation could become village tenants, invested with political power. Occasionally, also, this occurred through indebtedness or simply through acute or chronic acts of violence.³⁹ However, the great mass of Indian peasants were not declassed for such reasons. Rather, the financial system of the great kingdoms reduced them to mere subjects for rent squeeze. They could not receive consideration as members of "twice-born" castes.

Multitudes of more or less completely Hinduized native tribes are to be found among the peasants; ritual reasons alone prevent their reception as Vaishya. In one inscription ⁴⁰ a prince of the region of Iodhpur boasts of having chased out the *Ahir*, and established the *mahajan*—that is, the Brahmins, *prakriti* (which the translator would like to interpret to mean Kshatriya), and the Vaishya. Generally, and except where ritual impurity was involved, Hinduized tribes were viewed as "pure Shudras." The Vellallar, however, were never believed to belong to the Shudra.

In short, the caste-fate of the peasants bore traces of the social changes which resulted from the fiscalism of the bureaucratic state. A series of conditions, in part quite general, in part specifically Indian, coöperated to bring this about.

The loss of social class by the common freemen in the occidental Middle Ages was connected with their separation from the circle of the militarily trained, and hence from full-fledged membership in the warrior community which developed into professional knights. Economically, this development was caused by the increase in population, which, in coöperation with general culture conditions, led to intensified husbandry. Intensive agriculture required increasingly the competence of the freeman who lived off his family's labor. Thus he became economically less and less expendable and pacifistic. In contrast to the freeman of Tacitus' report, the mass of freemen had to take to the plough. In the Occident ploughmanship did not declass men to the same degree as in historical India, as the Roman Cincinnatus legend (a propaganda legend) and Nordic examples indicate.

For India certain social factors reinforced those normally tending to down-grade the peasant. In all the world including the ancient Occident, the development of the cities and the civil classes has led to the social depredation of the *pisang* (peasants).⁴¹ For the *pisang* did not participate in the conventions of cultured urban society, and militarily and economically he could not keep abreast of its development. The same opposition of urban and rural people (*pasira* and *janapada*) is evinced in Indian sources of all kinds. In this connection, however, the special circumstances in India must be taken into account.

As we shall see,^o Indian urban development facilitated the emergence of the principle of *ahimsa* which is observed by the pacifist salvation religions, by Buddhism, and most strictly by Jainism. With the development of the principle of *ahimsa*, the peasant, who in plowing destroys worms and insects, was not only declassed but ritually degraded. The peasant was reduced to even lower status than he had had in Jewry and (ancient and medieval) Christendom; and some traces of this status remained after the disappearance or curtailment of the urban salvation religions.

Animal husbandry, as it was a bloody business, sank deeply in social estimation. The cultivation of a number of special crops—vegetables, tobacco, beets, and others—was held to be degrading and indeed defiling for various ritualistic reasons. Finally, the increasing emphasis on literary culture and learning as the supreme religious and status qualification in place of magical charisma led to the social oppression of the peasant—a phenomenon which appears as well in Judaic Palestine and in medieval Christendom (for example, in Thomas Aquinas).

Often it goes unnoticed that in Christendom the peasant has come to his present position of honor and esteem only since the development of rationalism and scepticism among the bourgeois classes has turned the churches, for support of their power, to the traditionalist instincts of the peasants.

In ancient times peasant peoples gave precedence to animal husbandry in the vocational rank order. This was followed by tillage. Trade and especially money-lending⁴² was everywhere suspect and scorned. Later, however, trade was considered far superior. Trade came to be rated higher, if for no other reason

than that animal husbandry necessitated operations such as castration.

This is a radical reversal of the rank order of Vedic times. In the Vedas the merchant (*pani*) appears only as a wanderer, as a rule from strange tribes, haggling by day, stealing by night, collecting his riches in secret hordes, hated by God because he acts the miser against gods (in sacrifice) and men, especially holy singers and priests. Therefore, the "godless treasures" of the merchant stand in contrast to the wealth of the nobles who fill the hands of singers and priests. "Ari," the rich, the mighty, has, therefore, an evil and a good meaning, as Pischel and Geldner have observed.⁴³ He is the most sought-after, hated, and envied of men; one cannot be alone with him peacefully; he is fat and haughty, especially when he fails to pay singers and priests other than his own. He should give, and give again; when he does, he is the "darling of gods" and men. But the merchant simply does not do this.

At any rate, even the Atharavaveda⁴⁴ contains a prayer for the increase of the money which the merchant takes to market in order to make more money. All primitive religion honors wealth. Indeed, Indra is considered the god of the merchants and the Rigveda permits wealth to gain Heaven.⁴⁵ Wealth gives even the Shudra influence, for the priest accepts their money.

The odium of trade disappeared completely in the time of the city development. Monied wealth and trade remain the typical qualifications of the Vaishya in the Indian Middle Ages and, at present. However, the Vaishya have undergone many a crisis in their caste rank. As in the Occident during the time of the power of the guilds and the blossoming of the cities, a caste such as that of the goldsmiths was highly esteemed. In some territories even today goldsmiths hold first place and almost parallel the rank of Brahmans. It is noteworthy that North Indian sources considered them the typical guild of profligate charlatans.⁴⁶

Similarly, some other Bengal trader castes, which in the time of the establishment of the great kingdoms served as money-lenders of princes were ranked as Vaishyas at the zenith of their power, and later as degraded Shudra castes. According to reports, this resulted from conflicts with the Sena kings, especially with Vallala Sena. Modern claimants for rank elevation usually blame him for having overthrown the old caste ranks.

The evidence is convincing that the patrimonial bureaucratic domination brought about changes here as in the case of the noble castes. The present-day caste order in Bengal bears traces of a catastrophe. In other territories there is evidence of a decay or stagnation in the development of bourgeois power which often blurred the boundary lines between the Vaisiyya and Shudra.

The present-day trading castes of high rank are only in part ancient urban merchant castes. In part they grew out of the monopolistic trade organizations which the patrimonial prince called into being; and not every trader caste is necessarily a caste of high rank. Some of them, indeed, are impure and probably developed out of pariah tribes which monopolized the respective trade. Once again administrative history is mirrored in caste relations.

Money economy developed in India at about the time of the rise of Hellenism in occidental trade. Overseas and caravan trade with Babylon and later with Egypt existed far earlier. In India, as in Babylon, the procurement of coined money, that is, money in some way signed, later stamped, or molded metal blocks of a certain weight, remained at first a private affair of the great trader families with a trusted coinage.⁴⁷

Silver, the contemporary metal of India's currency was not produced in India. Gold, which the great kings of the early centuries used for coins, was produced in but small amounts. The treasures of precious metal came from trade with the West and can be estimated by the booty figures of the Mohammedans. Such treasures served essentially hoarding purposes, although it is perhaps no mere accident that one of the periods of flowering guild power or a renaissance of guild power during the second century A.D. coincided with the great influx of money from the Roman Empire and the coinage of *aurii* coins of the Roman type. The rulers of the Maurya Dynasty, including Ashoka, did not as yet mint coins of their own. The influx of precious metals from Greece and Rome stimulated the great kings of the first century A.D. to do so while the old private coins and *ersatz* coinage long remained in circulation.

In India, as in Babylon, the lack of a state coinage did not hinder the rise of capitalist trade and political capitalism. From around the seventh century B.C. for almost a thousand year period capitalism developed and expanded. The market appeared and became the administrative center. In times as late

as the rule of the Maharattas, villages without markets (*mouza*) were linked for purposes of administration to the *kusha*, the market towns (a kind of *metrokomia* in the sense of late Antiquity). The cities lost their initial character as mere princely fortifications (*pura*, *nagara*). They acquired—particularly on the sea coasts—a section which in its structure was related to the ancient seat of the prince and in its form, as the *mercato* in Italy, (the economic market, the place where buying and selling occurred was related) to the *piazza* (*del campo della signoria*), the place where, on public summons, the militia was reviewed and tournaments held. Evidence of these functions is clearly retained, in present-day Siena, in the layout of dual squares, before and behind the *palazzo pubblico*, and in the dualism of castle (*kasbah*) and market (*bazaar*) in Islamic cities. A description of the Tamil city of Kāvīrīpattinam, from the period shortly before our chronology, may serve as illustration.

Located in the trading city are most of the bazaars, workshops, and homes of the *yavana* (occidental) merchants. Located in the royal city are the luxury crafts: the Brahmans, doctors, astrologers, bards, actors, musicians, flower-decorators, pearl-string-makers, and absentee landlords. Between the two city districts extends the market place. The Tamil kings kept Roman mercenaries.⁴⁸

Rich nobles moved into the cities to consume their rents. According to one chronicle only the owners of one *kror* equaling 100 *lakhas* (the measuring unit for the great prebends according to their number of villages and rents) were permitted to dwell in the city.⁴⁹ There now appeared the possibility of accumulation of wealth through trade as well as rent.

Caravan trade was typically organized by caravan leaders and the guilds (*creni*, later called *gana*) rivaled the knighthood and priesthood in power. The king became financially dependent on the guilds with no means of controlling them other than playing them off against one another or bribery. Even in the epics⁵⁰ the king, after a defeat, expresses his concern about them (excepting his relatives and the priests). In several cities a gentile-charismatic chief appears at the head of the guilds, a chief representing the interests of the citizenry before the king. The elders of the guild (*marksherren*) stand at his side as an advisory body. This was, for example, the case in Ahmadabad. Now the three genteel estates were those of the secular and

priestly noble and the trader. They were often considered peers, they often intermarried, they had concourse with princes on equal footing.

The merchants financed the wars of the princes and had them mortgage or lease prerogatives to them as individuals or to their guild. And like the "commune" in the Occident, especially in France, the sworn brotherhood of the ruling estates also in India⁵¹ encroached upon the land. The intellectual aristocracy of the priests, the knightly nobles, and the bourgeoisie plutocracy competed for social influence. Even rich artisans, i.e., those who participated in trade, trafficked with the prince. Some of the artisans, at least, had apparently free choice of occupation. It was a time in which people of all classes, even the Shudra, were able to obtain political power.

The rising patrimonial prince with his disciplined army and officialdom was increasingly embarrassed by the power of the guilds and his financial dependence on them. We learn that a *vanik* (trader) denied a war loan to a king with the comment that the *dharma* of princes was not to conduct war, but to protect peace and peaceful prosperity of the citizens. He added, however, that the loan could perhaps be given anyway if the king were able to provide a suitable castle as security. There is described, furthermore, the great rage the king discharged at a banquet when the trader castes refused to take their place among the Shudras where the lord chamberlain had referred them and they left under protest. When these events were communicated by the officials to the king, he degraded these castes below the Shudras. Whether or not the actual events of the account of the Vellala Charita⁵² are true, they obviously indicate typical states of tension.

The antagonism between princely officials and bourgeois plutocrats was natural. The Kautaliya Arthasastra supplies evidence for this in the damnation of the goldsmiths who may partly have controlled ancient private coinage, and who were, partly, money-lenders to princes. Added to their weaknesses in numbers certain peculiarly Indian conditions had fateful consequences for the bourgeoisie in their struggle against the patrimonial prince: first, was the absolute pacifism of the salvation religions, Jainism and Buddhism, which were propagated, roughly, at the same time as the development of the cities. (The possible causal interrelationship between urbanism and the

salvation religions and its significance will be discussed below.) Second, there was the undeveloped but established caste system. Both these factors blocked the development of the military power of the citizenry; pacifism blocked it in principle and the castes in practice, by hindering the establishment of a *polis* or *commune* in the European sense.

Under such circumstances the army of Hoplites of the ancient *polis* could not develop. Impossible, too, were the summons of the guilds and the armies of condottieri of the medieval occidental city, both of which led in military technique. For example, the army of the Florentines was the first in Europe, so far as we can tell, to utilize firearms. To be sure, Megasthenes knew self-governing cities.⁵³ Vaicali at the time was a free city; a council of 5000, that is to say all those who could contribute an elephant, governed through a *uparaya* (viceroy).⁵⁴ While the epics tell of kingless lands it held them to be unclassical—usually one should not live in them.⁵⁵ This view agrees with the interest situation of the priest who is economically and socially dependent on the king. The beginnings of status privileges are to be found. The ancient assemblies (*samiti* and *sabha*) of the people were indeed either assemblies of armies or from early times—as in the epics—legal assemblies in which speakers on the law qualified by their charisma, or by their position as elders in interpreting the law. Without these elders the epics did not recognize the assemblies as lawful *sabhas*.⁵⁶

In the epics the king sought council from his relatives and friends. At the time, the nobles, (actually the top officials), occasionally formed a royal council. In South India considerable restrictions of royal prerogatives continued into the Middle Ages. There were representative assemblies with rights similar to those of our estates. In the cities, according to the epics, city elders⁵⁷ and citizens (*paurah*)^{58*} are to be found alongside the priests who, with the increasing administration of scribes, gain greater prominence as officials. In the later parts of the epics the priests are found almost alone as advisors of the king.

By now the city had become “a place where learned priests⁵⁹ are located,” somewhat in the manner of the early medieval *civitas* as the place of a bishop. The king derived a certain quota

* From Max Weber, p. 256 f. Where Weber stresses discipline rather than *firearms* as decisive. (Eds.)

of his officials for urban administration from the Vaishya caste when they were rich, and from the Shudra caste when they were virtuous (these obviously served as the collectors of liturgies or taxes from the guild).⁶⁰

Now it is always the royal officials who do the administrative work. As far as is known, a republican city administration in the occidental manner has nowhere been developed in a lasting and typical form, regardless of how clearly beginnings have pointed in this direction. In most Indian cities, the king and his staff always have remained dominant no matter what consideration they might have made in the single case to the power of the guilds. As a rule, guild power remained pure money power, not backed by an independent military organization. Hence it collapsed as soon as the princes found it expedient to depend upon priests and officials.

In India, too, the power of capital was great wherever numerous petty princes sought its support. In the long run, as everywhere else, however, capital could not retain independent power against the great kingdoms.

The Brahmans and the kings played off the intrinsically superior caste organization against the guilds. The caste could punish recalcitrant members with excommunication; as we know, sacerdotal means of coercion were of paramount significance for the economic history of our Middle Ages, too. A guild might attempt to secure observance of its rules; for example, restraint of competition among its members belonging to different castes. Ultimately, in such cases, the guilds could do so only by requesting that the castes employ their sanctions or by calling on the king.⁶¹ After the defeat of guild power the kings often commissioned traders as royal merchants with extensive monopolies in mercantilist interest, investing them with high rank in a fashion quite similar to that of modern occidental history.

However, the ancient independence of the guilds, and their role as representative of the citizenry against the king was gone. At any rate, they were hardly to be found throughout India. Under the dominion of the Malrattas the market was an administrative center, but each market by itself; hence in cities having several markets, the various city districts with their markets were separately organized, like rural market places (*kuscha*). There is nothing comparable to true self-government in the occidental manner. In some parts of India, particularly in the South during the Middle Ages, certain social privileges and

monopolies continued to exist as survivals of the ancient position of the guild and of privileged royal merchants. We do not know the content and privileges in single cases and they gradually dissolved into purely titular prerogatives.

Tamil kings granted the rights of *ujjuvannam* and *mani-granam* in one city to strangers and merchants, in one case to a Jew.⁶² The substance of the rights cannot, it seems, be ascertained. The first one, the "five caste right" may perhaps signify membership in a *mahajan* corporation of artisans in North Indian manner as well as a trading monopoly with respect to the five crafts. These "five crafts" are undoubtedly those practiced by the five legendary sons of the craftsman's god Visvakarma: iron, wood, copper, brass, stone, gold, and silver work which we shall discuss below.

In a second case certain trades are expressly designated as subordinate to the privileged ones and the recipient of the grant is designated as "Lord of the City." It is mentioned that a commission monopoly (putting out system?) and tax exemption be included in his privilege. For the rest certain revenues and honorific rights are connected with these positions such as the right to festive garments, sedans, umbrellas, lamps, music, etc.

The rise and fall of many commercial strata in the monopolistic system of the patrimonial princes is still evident in the position of contemporary Indian trader castes. The caste of the Lamani or Vanjani, also known as Banjari in the Bombay Presidency, are for example, a migratory guest tribe, who at one time controlled the salt and corn trade in the western Hindu states and who followed the armies as reported during the sixteenth century. Perhaps they represent a background element of the present-day Vania (Bania) caste.

Traces of the ancient guild organization and also of the *mahajan*, the guild brotherhood, survive in parts of the Gujarats.⁶³ In fact, the name *mahajan*, meaning *popolo grasso* (big people), was by no means restricted to the guilds. Rather, the inscriptions show that, originally, nobles (generally the Brahmans in the country and under certain conditions the members of other twice-born castes) were referred to as *mahajan*. During the guild epochs, however, and in the guild cities the term referred to members of the guilds; in various regions of western and central North India, there are trader sub-castes which to this day claim the designation *mahajan* for themselves.

Some castes belong to the ancient trading estate of the Vaniks,

and maintain their old rank position to this day except for certain sects such as the Jains, organized and monopolizing trade as a quasi-caste. (It will be discussed later.) Among the former belong particularly the Bhaniya who are widely diffused especially in West India. On the whole they are correct Hindus (vegetarians and teetotallers), wearing the holy belt, while in Bengal, the territory of the strictest patrimonial bureaucratic organization due to the activities of the Sena kings, the ancient trader castes of the Gandhabaniks and Subarnabaniks have since descended to low rank.

The Bhaniya, to be sure, have changed their ritual sufficiency to facilitate distant journeys which, as we shall see, are suspect to Hinduism. The degree of adaptability to modern conditions varies among the trading castes, depending upon the extent to which their caste rules permit them to set up branch establishments and travel in order to visit patrons. The Bhaniya especially are relatively unrestricted in these respects and hence "more modern" than other castes.

The economically ascending castes of liquor traders are for ritualistic reasons almost never admitted as peers by the ancient trader castes. Details are out of place here. The foregoing indicates how extensively the present-day Vaishya castes bear the traces of India's historical fate and political make-up, especially the fate of its citizenry.

A further residue of ancient feudal times is found in the present, relatively favorable caste rank of such occupational castes as the bards, (of the widely diffused caste of the Bhats), astrologers, genealogists, posters of horoscopes, who were formerly indispensable for every princely court and distinguished family and who are today indispensable as well for broad strata of low anti-Brahmanical castes. They belong in most cases to the twice-born and rank often before the Vaishya class. The high rank of the previously mentioned intellectual aristocracy of the Baidya (physicians), too, hangs together with their relation to distinguished houses.

Quite a few castes which formerly were and still are artisans claim Vaishya rank. Personal appearance in the market by respectable castes was held to be degrading and occasionally led to caste schism. Such artisans as claim caste rank do so when they work up their own raw materials and offer their product for sale, which usually yields them the polite address of *vanik* (mer-

chant). This brings us to the boundaries of the Shudra castes, castes which were the pillars of Indian industry.⁶⁴

4. *The Shudras*

AMONG the industrial castes two groups were outstanding. First we must consider a socially, i.e., ritualistically degraded caste which was able neither to give water to Brahmans nor employ them as house priests. Since all castes of the South can accept water only from their respective members, only the latter criterion applies there. In addition to its very different elements the Shudra class comprises primarily the ancient village crafts, hence artisans and workers who have no full right to the land. Such workers and artisans receive garden land, wages in kind or money, and their work from times of early settlement has been an indispensable supplement to the household economy of the peasants.

The peers of these workers and artisans were and are the remaining village servants whose local composition varied widely from place to place, often including the village priests. It is quite probable that they constituted the historical nucleus of the ancient Shudra class which had no right to village lands. As a rule the interlocal trades, such as the large, ancient weaver castes, hold an equivalent position. Of equivalent rank are the tailors, most of the potters, part of the peddler trades, the liquor dealers and oil pressers, and, finally, the numerous castes of farmhands and small holders. The caste rank of the potters varies widely depending on whether they work at the disk or use the form, or use oxen or the always-degrading donkey. In large territories, where these village outsiders were sufficiently numerous, they formed at times a separate community with a special *patel* provided by the most important trade, for example, the carpenters.⁶⁵

Ranking just above this ritualistically degraded stratum is another, substantially less degraded stratum which is considered to be "pure." In addition to the whole series of peasant castes, which vary in rank in the different regions which contain the mass of this class, there is typically to be found in this stratum a qualitatively important category of castes, the so-called *Nabasakh*—or *Nine-part-group*. The Nine-part-group obviously forms the kernel of the so-called *Sat-Shudra* (pure Shudra).

The occupations of this group are urban industries and trades: betel, perfume, and oil vending, pastry-making, gardening, and at times the making of pottery. An equal or superior position is occupied by the gold and silversmiths, lacquer-workers, masons, carpenters, silk-decorators, and a series of similarly specifically luxury or city occupations. Other castes occasionally belong to this group as a result of historical vicissitudes.⁶⁶ Similarly, there are Shudra castes of domestic servants of varying types which are held to be "pure."

These classifications were in no way systematized. At times practical necessity played a role in the elevation of an occupation. A man rendering personal service, who is forced, while caring for the patron's person, to touch him—a butler or barber, for example—could hardly be assigned to an impure caste. For the rest, the view may be correct that artisans who first appeared with the development of the city were not village bondsmen and hence from the beginning were social superiors to these menials and therefore also ritually privileged.⁶⁷ The industries which participated in urban retail trade were in a socially more favorable situation because of their personally independent economic position. Moreover, during the flowering of the cities they often organized into guilds while castes such as the weavers here, as in the Occident, were employed by the guilds for wages and placed under strong pressure. Thus the economic structure of the ancient city economy, or, better, the beginnings of one as it existed in India, casts its shadow into the very present. In any case, urban economy must have had great significance for the development of the Shudra class. In ancient literature⁶⁸ the idea may be found that the city in general was the settlement of Shudras, of craftsmen. However, urban economy per se, and the later establishment of individual crafts on its soil does not suffice to explain the rank differences between the various occupations.

The law books⁶⁹ enjoin the Shudra to dutiful "service." Only when he could find no service was he permitted to become an independent trader or craftsman. The sentence allows but one conclusion if any: slaves and bondsmen of the overlord, unless exploitable in his *oikos*, received in return for taxes (*apophora*, *obrok*, *leibzins*) permission for independent work on their own account in a manner similar to that of occidental and oriental Antiquity, of the Middle Ages, and of Russia prior to the aboli-

tion of serfdom. Direct evidence for this appears to be lacking. Contemporary vestiges of similar conditions, however, are to be found. There is, for example, a small caste of "slaves" in North-western India. These are domestic servants who outside their duties in the households have been permitted by their masters freely to pursue their trades. Also the insignificance, of compulsory slave labor in Indian industry, agrees with this. In any case the sources clearly indicate: (1) that bondsmen artisans appear alongside (2) the especially important and characteristically Indian village artisans, and (3) urban guild artisans. None of these, however, seems to represent the true archetype of the Shudra.

Four types of craftsman appear in the Indian economic order from the epics until the Middle Ages and in part until the present. These are:

(1) Helots of single villages settled on the village outskirts (*Wurth*) received a fixed wage in kind or some land. The work of these artisans almost always takes the form of strict wage labor, that is to say, the patron furnishes all materials (helot handicrafts).

(2) Artisans settled in separate, self-governing villages of their own.⁷⁰ There they offered for sale their services or wares made from their own raw materials or they sold their products personally or through traders in distant markets, or, finally, they worked at the places of their patrons (tribal handicraft).

(3) Artisans who were settled by a king, prince, temple, or landlord on their lands. Such artisans could be either bond or free men but were in any case subject to servitude. They supplied the lord's demand for goods (either *oikos* or liturgical handicraft). The latter may in part be combined with price labor. Since the rise of patrimonialism liturgical crafts are represented primarily by defense workers, by ship-builders and armorers who, reportedly, were often forbidden to work for private patrons. Blacksmiths and similar craftsmen, too, were subject to especially strict controls. (They are the crafts which in the early Roman state formed the *centuria fabrum*.)

(4) Independent artisans who settle in definite streets of the city and as price workers or wage workers offer their wares or their services in a bazaar (bazaar handicraft). A considerable part of the group probably were not permanent urban residents but represent an offshoot of the second category. Even at present,

we learn from Bombay, that the artisan, when aged or sufficiently prosperous, often retires from the city to his village. At any rate, this category does not represent a primary type, nor does the third. The princes, especially the rich ones of the trading cities of South India and Ceylon, recruited artisans from afar for the construction of palaces and temples. The princes settled such imported artisans with land in return for their service to the courts as construction workers and artist craftsmen. Their legal status varies. Alongside such purely liturgical artisans, compensated by service benefices and payment in kinds, there are to be found contractually free or tariffed wage workers who came of their own accord. The size of the land prebends of the Ceylonese royal craftsmen depended upon the nature of their services. Legally the craftsman was free to retire at any time from his service and to renounce his prebend.

The first category, helot handicraft, may frequently have been derived from the second group through the summoning of craftsmen from pariah tribes who had worked as itinerant journeymen at their patrons' places and then settling them in the village. The age of helot handicraft actually cannot be stated, for the early sources permit no clear insight into the situation of artisans. It is highly probable, however, that the development of helot handicraft soon followed the establishment of permanent settlements. In all probability the true primary form of such labor is that of tribal handicraft.

In the primary form of tribal handicraft, a tribe or tribal division settled in a village, producing for increasingly distant markets. Possibly, too, members of the tribe migrated into the neighborhood of princes and courts, there developing new, closed handicraft villages. We have reports of such handicraft villages precisely in nearby places.

The journeyman of the king arrived like the Brahmins at the call of a prince and permitted themselves to be settled in his territory. These royal artisans enjoyed a high degree of personal security. Under the Maurya Dynasty anyone who did severe bodily injury to an artisan had to face capital punishment. The relatively high rank of the Tanti weaver caste in Bengal as compared with the rank of weavers in other regions may possibly be explained by their origin from a royal Bengal craft. Apparently (and understandably) such royal handicraftsmen maintained on the whole the most distinguished rank among the artisans. Par-

ticularly in the great epoch of building which followed the introduction of stone construction in India (third century B.C.) there must have been an increased demand for them, especially for the newly developed craftsmen, stonecutters, and masons. Until the time of King Ashoka (third century B.C.) the ancient city of Pataliputra had wooden walls. Only under King Ashoka was the city fortified by brick walls. At the same time stone houses were built. The Indian Great Kings, too, established their bureaucracy, at least in part, as a construction bureaucracy. Thus, the increased demand must have elevated the position of such craftsmen and benefited the situation of their helpers and the decoration workers.

A similar rise in importance for the craftsmen involved must have been accomplished by the subsequent imports of precious metals from the Occident. An important illustration is found in the Kammalar artisans of South India and the nearby Islands. The rank order of the occupations is as follows: (1) iron workers, (2) wood workers, (3) copper and bronze workers, (4) stone and (5) precious metal and jewel workers—the five-caste craftsmen,⁷¹ (Panchvala) as they are named in Mysore. They worship Visvakarma as an ancestral lord and vocational god and have—as noted earlier—their own priests. They claim high rank, at times even Brahmanical descent.⁷²

The great and persisting schism in the South between the castes of the “right” and “left hands” resulted from their insurrection against the Brahmans. In any case their rank was in general higher than that of the craftsmen of ancient local trades as, for example, the potters and weavers. In Malabar they were considered impure, probably because they were schismatics. Yet social rank and likewise economic power position resulted often from very particular conditions. Such rifts as develop may in fact cut through one and the same caste. The Sutars in Bombay in their role as village carpenters are village servants. Their urban caste members became ship-builders and claimed to be Brahmans. When denied admittance as Brahmans, they developed priests of their own and discontinued commensalism with the village carpenters. Quite apart from special urban conditions, circumstances may place a premium upon the services of the helot artisans. When irregular services or services beyond those which are customary are demanded of the helot artisan, such as repairs out of season, he is favored by his monopoly

position. The village smith especially seems often to have raised considerable pretensions in India as elsewhere.

Literary sources and inscriptions on monuments show the considerable scope of the princely *oikos* and liturgical handicraft.⁷³ Royal (and similarly temple) artisans represented high quality labor among the Indian artistic crafts. Secure in their prebends they could afford the "time" to manufacture artistic products. Commarasvamy mentions without further references a vase in Delhi which was produced by three generations of a family of royal artisans. Almost always princely officials, and with the great kings, ministerial committees for industry developed; these offices could hardly have served any other purpose than to supervise the work of these artisans.⁷⁴

The substitution of money taxes for *corvées* is consistent with the character of administrative development; it brought these artisans into line with other trades of the royal cities which were subject to tax and license obligations. Tax payment was viewed as a compensation for trade monopolies⁷⁵ which were almost always guaranteed to some extent to settled artisans. On the other hand, there is found within the princely *oikos* the development of the *ergasterion*⁷⁶ as we know it from later occidental antiquity, especially from Egypt, as well as from the Byzantine and Middle-Eastern Middle Ages. Where royal grants of artisans to temples or Brahmans, or knightly vassals occur we may generally interpret the documents as referring to *oikos* or liturgical artisans.⁷⁷ Though not probable it is quite possible that as the king increasingly claimed the right to land and free disposition of the subjects' economic services, he may also have farmed out helot artisans or even tribal artisans.

In the time of guild power urban artisans to some extent shared the guild's prosperity. Where organized craft guilds often charged high initiation fees (varying according to the respective craft they might amount to several hundred dollars, a small fortune in India at the time). Like merchant guilds, price worker guilds developed hereditary membership; they imposed fines and controlled with these sanctions the nature of the work (holidays, work time), and established, above all, guarantees for the quality of the wares. As indicated, however, many craftsmen were dependent on the traders and their putting-out system. The self-government of artisans with the development of patrimonialism shared the fate of the guilds opposite the advancing caste

organization and the power of royal bureaucracy. In the cities as seats of princes royal guild masters appeared early. Without question, the king in his financial interest, controlled the crafts with increasing severity. The fiscal interests of the king may well have contributed to the stabilization of the caste order. It is necessary to assume, of course, that many guilds turned directly into castes (or subcastes) or as divisions of pariah tribes were not separate from them in the first place.

Artisan castes, at least the upper crust of the artisan-artists, had a fixed system of apprenticeship. The father, grand uncle, elder brother took their places as teaching masters and after the completion of apprenticeship, as house masters to whom all wage earnings had to be surrendered. Apprenticeship under a strange master of the caste is found. It followed rigid traditional norms and involved reception into the house community, with corresponding submission to the master. In theory, an apprentice had to acquire basic technology as prescribed by the *Silpa Castra*, a product of priestly scholarship. Therefore, stone-cutters were at times held to be a caste of literati and had the title *acarya* (teacher, master). The occidental parallel to this vacillating position is that of the "architect" at the time of the construction of Gothic domes, a problem treated by Hasack.

In general, the tools of the Indian artisan were technically so simple that many of them were self-made. Among some handicrafts the tools were worshipped as quasi-fetishes and the caste often honors them even at present in the Dasahra-festival. Alongside other traditional traits, this stereotyping of tools was one of the strongest handicaps to all technical development. The parallel in the fine arts was the stereotyping of models and the rejection of all designing after nature. Among some building crafts, particularly among handicrafts working with sacred objects, elements of technical procedure (e.g., painting the eye of a sacred picture) assumed the character of a magically relevant ceremony which had to follow definite rules. Any change of technique required often—with usually negative results—the consulting of an oracle, as the potters once found in the goddess Bhagavati.

It is difficult to determine in detail how long strict caste closure of various royal and urban handicrafts has existed in various territories. Several handicrafts may work closely together. Thus Colonel Hendley found a combination of wood, stone, and

metal work in North Jaipur.⁷⁸ But as a rule it is accompanied by strict guarantee of hereditary patronage.

The lowest caste stratum was considered to be absolutely defiling and contaminating. First, this stratum comprised a number of trades which are almost always despised because they involve physically dirty work: street-cleaning and others. Furthermore, this stratum comprised services which Hinduism had to consider ritually impure: tanning, leather work, and some industries in the hands of itinerant guest workers. However, it would be a great mistake to believe that the three industrial strata distinguished by us, that is, original urban or royal artisans, original village artisans, original guest workers, approximately fit the three-caste framework of the Sat-shudra, ordinary Shudra, and impure castes, if anyone disregards special, ritualistically determined exceptions (as for example, the leather trades).

Quite apart from ritually determined (direct or indirect) exceptions from that rule, caste organization presents far too colorful and irrational a picture. A great many, at first puzzling cases can only be classified in terms of their concrete historical development. For many others, general reasons for the ascent or descent of a caste or subcaste can be stated. This depends upon the conditions determining the origin, developments, or change of castes and subcastes. With this, we complete our survey of the empirical caste order and resume the discussion of general conditions.

CHAPTER III

CASTE FORMS AND SCHISMS

1. Caste Criteria

THE British census experts rightly distinguish two basic types of castes: tribal and professional. Our previous discussion of the former may now be supplemented. In all probability a multitude of castes developed historically from Hinduized tribal and guest peoples. It is principally these which make the picture of the caste rank order so irrational. For, other things being equal, a tribe which at the time of its Hinduization was settled on its own land achieved and maintained higher rank than pure pariah tribes which have been Hinduized. Moreover, a tribe which supplied mercenaries and soldiers of fortune fared still better. How then are we to recognize "tribal castes"?

A tribal caste is often identifiable by the form of its name. Yet, in the course of Hinduization quite a few tribes have assumed professional names. There are other criteria: subcastes frequently state a common ancestor; true upper castes usually have ancestral subcaste figures. There are frequently survivals of totem organization. Former tribal deities may be retained and, above all, tribal priests may serve as caste priests. Finally, members may be recruited from definite territories. Both the last named criteria are important only when taken in combination with one or other of the preceding criteria, for there are professional castes with strictly local recruitment and their own priests.

The endogamy of a tribal caste is often the less strict the closer it is to tribal status; it is also less exclusive toward caste outsiders. Generally pure-professional castes are most inflexible in these respects, which proves that ritualistic caste exclusive-

ness, though partly determined thereby, is no mere religious projection of ethnic strangeness.

The tribal caste is most clearly recognizable when one or several of a plurality of castes of the same profession retain a tribal name in addition to the usual professional caste name. The extent to which the castes were originally tribal castes is not determinable. The lowest castes may indeed have developed largely out of guest and pariah tribes. However, this is certainly not true of all of them. Relatively few of the more esteemed handicrafts, particularly the free and liturgical crafts of the cities and the ancient merchant castes, could have had this origin. Probably most of them developed out of economic specialization—from the differentiation of properties and skills. The peculiarity of Indian development which requires explanation is this: Why did it result in caste formation?

Apart from the reception of tribes caste formation could be modified only by caste schism.

2. *Caste Schism*

CASTE schism is always expressed by the complete or partial denial of connubium and commensalism. This may, in the first place, result from residential mobility of caste members. Migrant members were suspect of having offended against ritual caste duties. At very least, their correctness could not be controlled. The nomadism of cattle-breeders contributed to their loss of rank. Inasmuch as only Indian land, and that only insofar as proper caste order is established on it, can be holy land, strict orthodoxy views as doubtful any change of residence even within India since it takes the immigrant into a different ritualistic environment.

Only in cases of absolute necessity was travel considered correct. Internal migration in India, therefore, even at present, is far below what might be expected in view of the great transformation of economic conditions. More than nine-tenths of the people live in their native districts. As a rule only ancient village exogamy leads to settlement in another village. Permanent settlement of caste members in other places regularly results in the split up into new subcastes, for the residentially stable members refuse to consider the descendants of migrants as their peers.

As the Hindu system spread eastward from the upper Ganges, new subcastes of the old were formed which, other things being equal, ranked below those of the west.

A second reason for caste schism was the renunciation by some members of various former ritual duties or, the reverse of this, the assumption by some of new ritual duties. Both the renunciation of old rituals or the assumption of new ones could have a variety of causes. (1) Membership in a sect could absorb some ritual prescriptions or impose new ones. This is not very frequent. (2) Differentiation within a caste could lead the propertied members to assume the ritual obligations of higher castes, or to claim higher rank than formerly. To realize such aspirations one had first to break away from intermarriage and commensalism with former caste members. Today simple property differentiation quite often is made the occasion for splitting the community. (3) Occupational changes could lead to schism. According to rigid traditionalistic observance, not only change of occupation but a mere change of work technique may be sufficient reason for the followers of tradition to consider the community as broken. While such consequences do not always occur in fact, it is, perhaps, the most frequent and, in practice, the most important occasion for caste schism. Finally, (4) the disintegration of the ritualistic tradition among some of the members may lead the orthodox ones to cancel communal relations with them.

Today new castes may originate also from ritually illicit intercaste cohabitation. As is known, classical theory explained all impure castes in terms of caste mixture—the explanation, of course, is quite unhistorical. Still, there are some instances of caste origin from caste mixture, hence from concubinage.

Finally, schisms may simply result from the failure to settle all sorts of internal disputes. This is strongly disapproved of as a reason for caste fission and is usually concealed by alleging ritual offences on the part of the opponent.

Of greatest interest to us are the economic reasons for caste and subcaste origin: property differentiation, occupational mobility, technological change. We may be certain that property differentiation—occupational mobility was legitimate only by way of emergency pursuits—resulted in caste schism far less frequently under the national dynasties than it does at present. For the Brahmans, whose power then was incomparably greater,

upheld the caste order as established and habitual. If the stability of the caste order could not hinder property differentiation, it could at least block technological change and occupational mobility, which from the point of view of caste were objectionable and ritually dangerous. Today, the very fact that new skills and techniques actually lead to the formation of new castes or subcastes strongly handicaps innovation. It sustains tradition no matter how often the all-powerful development of imported capitalism overrides it.

All historical signs indicate that the truly strict caste order was originally based on the professional castes. This is indicated in the first place by the geographical distribution of tribal and professional castes. To be sure, one can rarely ascertain whether any given caste originated out of ethnic or gentile charismatic professional differences. In Bengal, for instance, the ancient caste of blacksmiths, the Lohars, are a typical professional caste which undoubtedly is ethnically heterogeneous. Yet in the later conquest territories of East Bengal and the South, castes which can be proven to have been originally tribal castes decidedly outnumber and overshadow professional castes. On the other hand, on the classical soil of North Central India, castes traceable (or presumably so) to original gentile charismatic occupational classes without ethnic differences are more frequent.¹ Besides, professional castes, particularly those of industry, are the very pillars of rigid caste segregation and tradition—alongside pure peasant castes, for which a rigid traditionalism goes without saying. The rigid traditionalism of these professional castes is expressed in their still tenacious attachment to their customary pursuits—they are second in this only to a few very ancient pariah tribes. In the traditionless environs of metropolitan Calcutta, among the Hindu castes more than 80 per cent of the laundrymen followed their traditional pursuits, as did more than 50 per cent of the Hindu castes of fishermen, street-cleaners, basket-weavers, pastry cooks, domestic servants, and even goldsmiths. However, only 30 per cent of the scribes (Kayastha) were clerks, and only 13 per cent of the Brahmans were priests, teachers, pandits, and cooks.² As a consequence of European competition only 6 per cent of the old weaver castes (Tanti) were engaged in their trade.

As one would expect, the devastating competition of European and now Indian capitalist industry has completely eliminated

quite a number of professions or at least their handicraft basis. Where this is not the case, the ratio of professional caste members who continue their traditional pursuits despite basic transformation of the economy still remains extraordinarily high. The majority of the workers for specifically "modern" job opportunities, particularly big industry, are recruited, not from the ancient industrial castes, but predominantly from rural migrants, declassed and pariah castes, and declassed members of certain higher castes.

Modern capitalist businessmen (if at all Indian) and commercial and administrative employees are largely recruited from certain ancient trader castes. Quite understandably, furthermore, in view of the nature and educational prerequisites of modern office work recruitment also occurs from literati castes which earlier had a wider occupational choice than the industrial castes.³ In Bombay Province the most important castes engaged in administrative pursuits appear in the following order: Prabu (ancient caste of officials) 27 per cent of the caste members; Mahars (village officials) 10 per cent; Brahmans 7.1 per cent; Lohana (gentle traders) 5.8 per cent; Bhatia (traders) 4.7 per cent; Vania (members of the great ancient trading caste) 2.3 per cent; Rajputs, 2 per cent; all other castes had less than 1 per cent of their members in administration.

Economically, the traditionalism of the professional castes rests not only upon a mutual segregation of the various branches of production, but also, and today very often, upon the protection of the livelihood of caste members against mutual competition. The artisan belonging to the ancient "village staff" who was settled on garden land or who received a fixed income was absolutely protected in this respect. However, the principle of patronage protection, the guarantee of the *jajmani* relation, went much further and still is strictly enforced by numerous occupational castes. We learned of the principle in connection with the Brahmans, and the meaning of the word *jajmani* ("sacrifice giver") suggests that the concept originated in the conditions of the Brahman caste. It could, perhaps, best be rendered by "personal diocese." The status etiquette of the Brahmans secures their dioceses among some other castes. They are by the caste organization and indeed—as always in India—hereditary (clan charismatic).

The Chamar hereditarily receives the dead cattle from certain

families and supplies them with leather for shoes and other needs; meanwhile his wife serves the same circle of patrons as midwife. The beggar castes have definite begging districts somewhat like our chimney-sweeps (however, these are hereditary). The Nai serves his hereditary patron as barber, manicurist, pedicurist, bather, and dentist. The last two pursuits are virtually degrading. The Bhangi is street-cleaner for a definite district. According to reports some castes, e.g., the Dom (domestics and beggars) and the Bhangi, have alienable patronage which often formed part of dowries.⁴ Where the institution exists to-day, trespassing on another's patronage rights still constitutes a ground for excommunication from the caste.

However, not only do the ancient occupational castes sustain a rigid traditionalism, but also, in general, they uphold the strictest ritualistic caste exclusiveness. Nowhere are endogamy and the exclusion of commensalism more rigidly observed than by the occupational castes, and this is by no means true only of the interrelation of high with low castes. Impure castes shun infectious contact with nonmembers as rigidly as high castes. This may be taken as conclusive proof of the fact that mutual exclusiveness was predominantly caused, not by social, but by ritualistic factors based on the quality of many of these castes as ancient guest or pariah people. Especially "correct" Hindu communities are to be found precisely among the old industrial castes and in part among the impure castes.

The extreme caste traditionalism of many industrial and indeed lower castes (apart from an important religious ground to be examined later) is determined by their frequently strict caste, or as a rule subcaste, organization. (Normally this organization supports caste discipline; more will be said later on this subject.)

The caste organization suggests the ancient village community with its hereditary headman and its council of sib or family heads. In fact, the existence of a village *panchayat* is today denied with great vehemence.⁵ Allegedly there are only caste-*panchayats* and among these the *panchayats* of peasants belonging to one caste and settled in a village. In terms of the material available in continental Europe, indeed the issue can only be whether the *panchayats* of numerous villages representing the village members ("full peasants") have their origin in the caste or were somehow modelled after early village institutions.⁶ (The latter appears most probable.)

The position of the village chief was never absolutely hereditary, but only gentile charismatic. An unfit village head could under certain conditions be deposed; the successor, however, was usually chosen from the same family. As already noted, this principle of clan charisma pervaded all Indian organization from the political association to the guild. Strict primogeniture of rules only later became sacred law. As a rule the guild leaders and elders (*shreshthi*) were and remained hereditarily charismatic. This was also true for the caste, at least for the leader, *sar panch*, and often also for the members of the *panchayat*.

Originally, all economic or official functions served the "community," and in the Indian villages were always incumbent upon hereditarily settled workers who were paid in kind. This may have helped to conserve and diffuse this arrangement which, as documented by inscriptions, is to be found elsewhere, for example, among Mid-Eastern artisans in Hellenic times. A contributing factor was possibly a royal investiture of men responsible for the various industries and their services at the time of the great Hindu patrimonial kingdoms. But the ancient, principle of clan charisma remained the decisive underpinning of the Brahman.

The idea of electing the leaders in our present-day sense was indeed nowhere originally basic to religious and (decidedly less so), then, to political organization. What to us may appear as an election always was the dutiful recognition or acclamation of a man endowed with personal or gentile charisma. The old position of the "elders" in the reformed presbyterial constitutions was still charismatic. The constitution of our "synodal constitutions" in contrast developed out of the modern concept of representation. In India, too, the recent repeated meetings of the *sabhas* (caste assemblies of all members or at least of all heads of families) is of modern origin. Today, for example, they not only make decisions about the sending of students to Japan, but also about changes in important social customs; for example, the lifting of the ban on the remarriage of widows, a question which earlier could not have been decided by voted resolutions but only by the judgment of the Brahmins.

As a rule, the dioceses of the *panchayat* represent delimited local areas. Interlocal interest associations or cartels for the discharge of definite business appear within the castes. Survivals of guilds as divisions of castes or as caste leagues are to be

found. Likewise there are guild residues which comprise caste outsiders. In exceptional cases there may be found a central organization of entire castes which is considered superordinate to the *panchayat*. This occurs for the most part in territories which for a long time formed unitary political realms. In contrast, local caste schism is greatest where no political unity existed for long periods.

3. Caste Discipline

WHAT is the jurisdiction of the *panchayat* or its corresponding organ? It is highly variable. Occupational issues in no way form the center of gravity; at present the caste or subcaste does not function primarily as a guild or trade union. Most issues involve questions of ritual. Among the issues adjudged by the *panchayat* are, in order, adultery and other offences against intersexual ritualistic etiquette and atonement for other ritualist offences of the members including especially the offence against the rules of intermarriage and commensalism or against purity and dietary laws. Problems such as these always played an important role in the decisions of the *panchayat*, because tolerance of magical offenders by the caste could draw evil magic upon the whole caste.

However, professional problems play a very significant role among some ancient and traditionally stable middle and lower castes. In the first place, the caste is self-evidently concerned with all shifts of members to ritually degrading or suspect pursuits, be they new professions or new techniques. According to the circumstances, this may in practice have far-reaching implications. But there are also nonritualistic caste problems such as the violation of *jajmani* rights by a caste member or infringement by outcastes or strange castes upon the caste's economic monopoly. Furthermore, other caste rights may be violated by caste outsiders. It is precisely the ancient and traditionalistic castes which intervene most vigorously in economic affairs, which suggests that this aspect of the caste order probably had far wider significance in earlier times.

The assumption by many industrial and lower castes of the functions of a guild or trade union is explained by the typical interest situation of handicraftsmen and skilled workers. This, in turn, explained the frequent and quite intense caste loyalty

of the lower castes. Nonpayment of debts, divisions of wealth and bagatelle trials are not unusual among members today. However, occasionally castes seek to hinder members from bearing witness against one another. Most questions, however, are of a ritualistic nature, and occasionally they concern fairly important issues. The power of the *panchayats* and *sabhas* has been growing in the field of ritual. In truth this is a characteristic phase of a slowly progressive emancipation movement from the power of the Brahmans which finds expression in these apparently archaic caste affairs. This preoccupation is the Hindu equivalent of the striving for "congregational autonomy" in the Occident.

Against outsiders the sanction of the caste is boycott; against members its sanctions are the imposition of money fines, judgments of ritualistic expiation, and in case of obstinacy and grave cases of the violation of caste norms, excommunication (*bahishkara*). Today this last does not mean excommunication from Hinduism, but only from the single caste. To be sure, this may have wide ramifications. Anyone, for example, who continues to accept the services of the excommunicated caste member may be boycotted.

Today most *panchayats* (and other equivalent organs) make decisions without consulting the *castris* and *pandits*, such consultation being considered optional. Of course, some castes, including the lower ones, still appeal to one or other of the holy seats (the monasteries in Sankeshwar or Shringeri). According to ancient Hindu conceptions autonomous legal enactments by a caste was out of the question. Holy right always can only be revealed or recognized anew, as having existed of yore. However, the present-day lack of a Hindu political authority and the resulting weakened position of the Brahmans, has permitted occasionally independent legal enactments as a due and correct form of recognizing the law. As in the case of usurpation of caste rank the abolition of the political and patrimonial church state structure of the old kingdoms here clearly worked tangibly and distinctly in the direction of a slow disintegration of caste tradition.

The less thoroughly tribal castes are Hinduized the more features of ancient tribal organization are substituted for those of the typical caste. We shall not examine these here in detail.

Finally, the high castes, especially the Brahmans and Rajputs, often lack all unified durable organization in their subcastes as

well as the main caste. As far as we can determine, this has always been true. In urgent cases such as gross ritualistic offences of a member the heads of the *maths* (monasteries) are called together; more recently, also, assemblies of the respective caste division are called. Unquestionably, the Brahmins, and their *castris* and *pandits*, their schools and monasteries, the acknowledged centers of sacred study and the ancient, famous, holy seats generally, know how to preserve their authority. However the Vedic schools, the philosophic schools, the sects, and ascetic orders have long been in competition with one another. Furthermore, the ancient distinguished Brahmin clans have been opposed, on the one side, to those who have gradually usurped the rights of Brahmins, and on the other, to those strata and subcastes which were degraded to Brahmins of lesser rights. All these antagonisms produced deep internal tensions. They inhibit ingroup relations, the strong "we-feeling" based on status consciousness toward the outside.

Among the Rajputs the great influence of Brahmanical house priests (*purohita*) in maintaining ritualistic correctness substituted for the lack of caste organs. Some of the subcastes always have had strong organizations and their status feeling is fairly strong. Even the great diversity of occupational pursuits of the two castes remains on the whole well within the limits of ritualist correctness. The emergency occupations mentioned by Manu indicated how very old they are.

The pure castes of scribes are best understood as products of the patrimonial Indian kingdoms. Their historical influence extends into the present. In contrast to the ancient social and feudal aristocracies these castes of scribes have high pretensions to caste rank but incomparably less status pride. This is quite understandable, and made clear by their present occupational composition. Among the trader castes residues of the ancient guilds have survived. For the rest, their organization today seems less strict under the native princes who often exploit the economic and particularly the urban castes, but, as well, the pariah peoples for liturgical duties and corresponding monopoly rights.

With this we may conclude this sketch which, despite its lengthy treatment of the caste system, must unavoidably remain very incomplete.

4. *Caste and Traditionalism*

WE ARE now in a position to enquire into the effects of the caste system on the economy. These effects were essentially negative and must rather be inferred than inductively assessed. Hence we can but phrase a few generalizations. Our sole point is that this order by its nature is completely traditionalistic and anti-rational in its effects. The basis for this, however, must not be sought in the wrong place.

Karl Marx has characterized the peculiar position of the artisan in the Indian village—his dependence upon fixed payment in kind instead of upon production for the market—as the reason for the specific “stability” of the Asiatic peoples. In this, Marx was correct.

In addition to the ancient village artisan, however, there was the merchant and also the urban artisan; and the latter either worked for the market or was economically dependent upon merchant guilds, as in the Occident. India has always been predominantly a country of villages. Yet the beginnings of cities were also modest in the Occident, especially inland, and the position of the urban market in India was regulated by the princes in many ways “mercantilistically”—in a sense similar to the territorial states at the beginnings of modern times. In any case, insofar as social stratification is concerned, not only the position of the village artisan but also the caste order as a whole must be viewed as the bearer of stability. One must not think of this effect too directly. One might believe, for instance, that the ritual caste antagonisms had made impossible the development of “large-scale enterprises” with a division of labor in the same workshop, and might consider this to be decisive. But such is not the case.

The law of caste has proved just as elastic in the face of the necessities of the concentration of labor in workshops as it did in the face of a need for concentration of labor and service in the noble household. All domestic servants required by the upper castes were ritually clean, as we have seen. The principle, “the artisan’s hand is always clean in his occupation,”⁷ is a similar concession to the necessity of being allowed to have fixtures made or repair work done, personal services, or other work accomplished by wage workers or by itinerants not be-

longing to the household. Likewise, the workshop⁸ (*ergasterion*) was recognized as "clean." Hence no ritual factor would have stood in the way of jointly using different castes in the same large workroom, just as the ban upon interest during the Middle Ages, as such, hindered little the development of industrial capital, which did not even emerge in the form of investment for fixed interest. The core of the obstacle did not lie in such particular difficulties, which every one of the great religious systems in its way has placed, or has seemed to place, in the way of the modern economy. The core of the obstruction was rather imbedded in the "spirit" of the whole system. In modern times it has not always been easy, but eventually it has been possible to employ Indian caste labor in modern factories. And even earlier it was possible to exploit the labor of Indian artisans capitalistically in the forms usual elsewhere in colonial areas, after the finished mechanism of modern capitalism once could be imported from Europe. Even if all this has come about, it must still be considered extremely unlikely that the modern organization of industrial capitalism would ever have *originated* on the basis of the caste system. A ritual law in which every change of occupation, every change in work technique, may result in ritual degradation is certainly not capable of giving birth to economic and technical revolutions from within itself, or even of facilitating the first germination of capitalism in its midst.

The artisan's traditionalism, great in itself, was necessarily heightened to the extreme by the caste order. Commercial capital, in its attempts to organize industrial labor on the basis of the putting-out system, had to face an essentially stronger resistance in India than in the Occident. The traders themselves in their ritual seclusion remained in the shackles of the typical oriental merchant class, which by itself has never created a modern capitalist organization of labor. This situation is as if none but different guest peoples, like the Jews, ritually exclusive toward one another and toward third parties, were to follow their trades in one economic area. Some of the great Hinduist merchant castes, particularly, for instance, the Vania, have been called the "Jews of India," and, in this negative sense, rightly so. They were, in part, virtuosi in unscrupulous profiteering.

Nowadays a considerable tempo in the accumulation of wealth is singularly evident among castes which were formerly considered socially degraded or unclean and which therefore were

especially little burdened with (in our sense) "ethical" expectations addressed to themselves. In the accumulation of wealth, such castes compete with others which formerly monopolized the positions of scribes, officials, or collectors of farmedout taxes, as well as similar opportunities for politically determined earnings typical of patrimonial states. Some of the capitalist entrepreneurs also derive from the merchant castes. But in capitalist enterprise they could keep up with the castes of literati only to the extent to which they acquired the "education" nowadays necessary—as has been occasionally noticed above.⁹ The training for trade is among them in part so intense—as far as the reports allow for insight—that their specific "gift" for trading must by no means rest upon any "natural disposition."¹⁰ That ancient castes with strong occupational mobility often drift into occupations whose demands on "natural disposition" form the greatest psychological contrast imaginable to the previous mode of activity, but which stand close to one another through the common usefulness of certain forms of knowledge and aptitudes acquired through training, speaks against imputations of "natural disposition." Thus, the frequent shift, mentioned above, from the ancient caste of surveyors—whose members naturally know the roads particularly well—to the occupation of chauffeur may be referred to among many similar examples. However, in spite of the adaptability of some of the castes we have no indication that by themselves they could have created the rational enterprise of modern capitalism.

Finally, modern capitalism undoubtedly would never have originated from the circles of the completely traditionalist Indian trades. The Hindu artisan, is nevertheless, famous for his extreme industry; he is considered to be essentially more industrious than the Indian artisan of Islamic faith. And, on the whole, the Hindu caste organization has often developed a very great intensity of work and of property accumulation within the ancient occupational castes. The intensity of work holds more for handicraft and for individual ancient agricultural castes. By the way, the Kunbis (for instance, those in South India) achieve a considerable accumulation of wealth, and nowadays, as a matter of fact, it takes modern forms.

Modern industrial capitalism, in particular the factory, made its entry into India under the British administration and with direct and strong incentives. But, comparatively speaking, how

small is the scale and how great the difficulties. After several hundred years of English domination there are today only about 980,000 factory workers, that is, about one-third of 1 per cent of the population.¹¹ In addition, the recruitment of labor is difficult, even in those manufacturing industries with the highest wages. (In Calcutta, labor often has to be recruited from the outside. In one near-by village, hardly one-ninth of the people speak the native language of Bengal.) Only the most recent acts for the protection of labor have made factory work somewhat more popular. Female labor is found only here and there, and then it is recruited from among the most despised castes, although there are textile industries where women can accomplish twice as much as men.

Indian factory labor shows exactly those traditionalist traits which also characterized labor in Europe during the early period of capitalism. The workers want to earn some money quickly in order to establish themselves independently. An increase in wage rate does not mean for them an incentive for more work or for a higher standard of living, but the reverse. They then take longer holidays because they can afford to do so, or their wives decorate themselves with ornaments. To stay away from work as one pleases is recognized as a matter of course, and the worker retires with his meagre savings to his home town as soon as possible.¹² He is simply a mere casual laborer. "Discipline" in the European sense is an unknown idea to him. Hence, despite a fourfold cheaper wage, competition with Europe is maintained easily only in the textile industry, as two-and-a-half times as many workers and far more supervision are required. One advantage for the entrepreneurs is that the caste division of the workers has so far made any trade union organization and any real "strike" impossible. As we have noticed, the work in the workshop is "clean" and is performed jointly. (Only separate drinking cups at the well are necessary, at least one for the Hindus and one for the Islamites, and in sleeping quarters only men of the same caste sleep together. A fraternization of labor, however, has (so far) been as little possible as a *conjunctio* (sworn confederation) of the citizens.¹³

Unfortunately, there are but scanty materials concerning the participation by castes in modern capitalist business—at least, only a few detailed descriptions are available to the outside student.

Apparently in Calcutta modern "skilled" labor is mainly recruited from the castes of the Kaivarthas (an old tribal caste of peasants and fishermen), the Kayasths (scribes), and Tantis (an old weaver caste). Unskilled handworkers, so-called coolie workers, also are recruited from the castes of the Kaivarthas and Kayasths as well as from the despised castes of the Goala (an old pariah tribe of dairy men), and the Chamar, the large unclean caste of leather workers of Bengal. Today the lowest castes deprived of their traditional pursuits are here and elsewhere most strongly represented among the coolies.

Millhands proper come primarily from four castes: the Tanti (weavers), Kaivarthas (peasants and fishermen), Chamar (leather workers), and Kayasths (scribes).

In contrast to this 45 per cent of the Chatris (allegedly Kshatriyas, actually an ancient tribe of professional soldiers) are peasants, peons, and domestics; almost none is found in public service or industry.

The textile industry of the province of Bombay employs 63 per cent of the weavers' castes, 11.7 per cent of the Bhatias (an old marginal trading people), 9.8 per cent of the Vani (genteel traders), 3.8 per cent of the Rajputs, over 1 per cent of the Prabhus (officials), and Mahans (village officials), fewer of the remaining castes. The traders and last mentioned castes primarily represent the entrepreneurs (or proprietors in the case of the Rajputs). In Bombay Province, commerce (exclusive of food industries) engages the following percentages of the castes: Brahmans, 3.2 per cent; Vania (an old caste of aristocratic traders), 24.85 per cent; Bhatia (an old marginal trading people, 7 per cent; Rajputs and Mahrattas, practically none; Prabhu (officials), 9.3 per cent; Lohana (an old distinguished trading caste in Sindh), 6 per cent; weavers, Koli (small holders), Kunbi (peasants), Mahar (village officials), practically none; Pandharies (palm juice distillers), 2 per cent; considerable fractions of the old traders' castes today are employed in the food industries (probably mainly in retail trade). Thus, 4 per cent of the Vania; 61.3 per cent of the Bhatia, 22.8 per cent of the Lohana are so employed. Of all other castes only a few and practically none of the genteel castes are employed in the food industry.

Gait in the general Report of the 1911 Census states the following with reference to the income of the main castes (from sources other than office, pension, and securities—Part IV of the

Income Tax Act) and the reports from census superintendents: In Bengal there were around 23,000 persons assessed for income tax from gainful employment. The Mohammedans with twenty-four million or 51.7 per cent of the people had only 3,177 persons taxable for income from gainful occupation, hence somewhat over one-eighth of the total. The single Kayasth caste (of scribes) had almost as many and, indeed, some from enterprises, some from professions. Next in importance were the Brahmans constituting 50 per cent of those assessed and drawing their income from profits. The Shahar (119,000 persons) a small subcaste of the Sunri, monopolizing the liquor traffic, were almost equal in representation to the Brahmans. They represented the highest percentage of taxable persons. Beside them only the oil pressers and trader castes of the Teli had over 1,000 taxable persons; all other castes had less. The report found it surprising that the ancient trader castes of the Gandhabaniks and Subarnabaniks, which, judging by the names, were originally spice and precious metal traders were represented only by 500 taxable persons; however, in terms of proportional numbers (from 100,000 and 120,000 persons) this is still stronger representation than the Teli-caste (one and a half million).

The trading caste of the Shaha is of low Shudra rank: the Brahmans do not always accept water from its members. Shahas take to modern profit opportunities with fewer scruples than do the Teli (who in Bengal rank equal to the Nabasakh group) and the castes of the Gandhabaniks and Subarnabaniks which probably have a justified claim to former Vaishya rank. This is quite plausible but also indicative of the traditionalistic spirit of true ancient Hinduism.

In contrast to the Islamites of Bengal, the superior adaptability of appropriate Hindu castes to the rational pursuit of profit is apparent. The relative inferiority of the Islamites in these respects appears in all other provinces. The Islamic Sheik caste has big taxpayers (particularly in Punjab) essentially among the large landlords, like the Rajputs, Babhans (a distinguished landlord and corn wholesaler caste), and frequently also the Brahmans and the Khatri standing near the Rajputs. In Bombay Province rentiers were most strongly represented among the castes of the Brahmans, Prabhu (officials), Mahar (village officials), Lohana (traders).

In Bihar among those taxable for capitalistic income are pri-

marily the Agarvals (a subcaste of the Kewat, an ancient trader caste). Among the taxable classes, the Kalvan and Sunri (ancient castes of palm juice distillers) and the Teli (oil pressers) quantitatively rank equal with the distinguished castes of Brahmans and Babhans. Among them these seven castes obtain one-half of their taxable income from trade.

In the upper Ganges Valley (United Provinces), the ancient territory of classical Hinduism, in Punjab and in the South the wealthiest people are usually the ancient trader castes of the Baniyas, deriving their income from trade. In the Northwest the Khatris (an ancient, distinguished, internationally famous caste of traders and scribes) play a significant role as rent-receiving landlords alongside the Brahmans. Furthermore they outdistance all other castes in income from industry. However, the Kayasth (in the upper Ganges Valley) draw a disproportionately high share of income from professions.

The partial employment of tremendous native wealth as investment capital in modern business was of relatively minor importance for a long time. In the jute industry it is lacking almost completely. "Bad experiences" not only with entrepreneurs and *associes*, but also with foremen was back of this. Even now, for example, in the Indian jute industry only the overseer—but almost no other technical or commercial functionary—is of Indian descent (the latter are mainly Scotchmen).¹⁴ Furthermore, the Jute industry with an average of 3,420 employees per plant¹⁵ is the most highly developed large industry in India.

Differential pecuniary acquisitiveness, favors bestowed upon literati, and, above all, upon traders who are, from the Hindu standpoint ethnically less principled (liquor dealers), and the strong preference of Hindu wealth for commercial investment is obvious in comparison with Islamite wealth. This is in agreement with the often noted industriousness of the more traditionalistic Hindu artisan as compared with the Islamite craftsman. Both phenomena are co-determined by the system of Hindu caste duties. We shall now turn to this important point.

5. *The Religious Promise of the Caste System*

AS NOTED earlier, Hinduism is unusually tolerant of doctrine (*mata*) while placing greatest emphasis on ritual duties (*dharma*). Nevertheless, Hinduism has certain dogmas—to be

discussed presently—if by dogma one means credal truths whose denial is considered heretical and places the group if not the individual outside the Hindu community.

Hinduism recognizes first of all a number of official systems of doctrine. We shall discuss them briefly later in a survey of the salvation religions of the intellectual strata. Here we are interested only in the fact that heterodox doctrines do exist. Two are particularly mentioned in the literature: the philosophy of the materialists and that of the Bauddhas (Buddhists).

What, specifically, makes Buddhism heterodox? Certainly not the rejection of Brahmanical authority since this is found also among Hindu castes. The admission of all castes to salvation is also found among the Hindus. The recruitment by Buddhism of monks from all castes might have turned it into a ritually impure sect-caste. The rejection of the Vedas and Hindu ritual as without value for salvation, however, was a greater gravamen. The Buddhists established their own *dharma* which in parts was more severe than that of the Brahmins. And they are reproached not only for their ritualistic castelessness but also for their heretical teaching, regardless of whether this was the true reason for denying them recognition as Hindus.

What was the heresy of the Buddhists and what does it have in common with the heresy of the materialists in opposition to the teaching of the orthodox schools? The Buddhists, like the materialists, denied the existence of the soul, at least, as a unity of the "I." (For the time being we use the term "soul" in a quite provisional and undifferentiated way, hence without regard to the fact that Hindu philosophy developed several metaphysical conceptions of the nature of the soul.) The denial of the belief in a soul had for the Buddhists—and, indeed, at the decisive point to be mentioned presently—an almost purely theoretical significance. Yet the decisive (theoretical) impulse (for the development of the heresy) was apparently located here. For Hindu philosophy and all that one can designate as "religion" of the Hindu beyond pure ritualism depends on the belief in the soul.

All Hindus accept two basic principles: the *samsara* belief in the transmigration of souls and the related *karman* doctrine of compensation. These alone are the truly "dogmatic" doctrines of all Hinduism, and in their very interrelatedness they represent the unique Hindu theodicy of the existing social, that is to say, caste system.

The belief in the transmigration of souls (*samsara*) grew directly out of universally diffused representations of the fate of the spirit after death. It appears elsewhere in the world, for example, in Hellenic antiquity. In India the fauna and co-existence of different colored races may have facilitated the origin of the idea. It is quite probable that the "army of monkeys" which, according to the *Ramayana*, appeared in South India, was in fact an army of dark Dravidians. Rightly or wrongly it appears that apes and men were thought to be alike and that this idea suggested South India, the seat of black peoples, who looked like apes to the Aryans.

Originally, the departed soul was as little viewed as "immortal" in India as elsewhere. The death sacrifice was intended to put the souls at rest and allay their envy and wrath against the fortunate living. The residence of the "fathers" remained problematical. According to the Brahmanas they faced death by starvation without sacrifice. Sacrifice, therefore, was considered to be the primary merit. Occasionally, also, one wished the gods a long life and increasingly the assumption appears that the existence of neither gods nor men is eternal in the next world.¹⁶

When the Brahmins began to speculate about their fate, there gradually appeared the teaching of a "second death" leading the dying spirit or god into another existence. The idea that this existence was also on earth was joined to the concept of "animal souls" which probably existed in India as elsewhere. With this the basic elements of the teaching were given.

The connecting of the doctrine of transmigration of souls with that of compensation for good and evil deeds in the form of a more or less honorable rebirth is not exclusively Indian, but is found elsewhere, for example, among the Hellenes. However, two principles are characteristic of Brahman rationalism which determined the pervasive significance of the doctrinal turn: (1) it was believed that each single ethically relevant act has inevitable consequences for the fate of the actor, hence that no consequence can be lost; the doctrine of *karma*; (2) the idea of compensation was linked to the individual's social fate in the societal organization and thereby to the caste order. All (ritual or ethical) merits and faults of the individual formed a sort of ledger of accounts; the balance irrefutably determined the fate of the soul at rebirth, and this in exact proportion to the surplus of one or other side of the ledger.

In India, belief in destiny, astrology, and horoscope-casting

were widely diffused for a long time. On closer inspection it seems that the horoscope might well indicate man's fate, but that *karma* determined the good or evil significance of the constellation for the individual. There could be no "eternal" reward or punishment for the individual; such, indeed, would be entirely out of proportion to finite doings. One can stay in heaven or hell only for a finite period.

In general, both heaven and hell play a secondary role in Indian thought. Originally, heaven for the Hindus was probably only a Brahman and warrior heaven. Moreover, hell could be avoided by the blackest sinner through the most convenient purely ritualistic means—the speaking of a certain formula in the hour of death, even when this was spoken by others (even unknowingly and by the enemy).

There was however no sort of ritual means and in general no (inner-worldly) deed which would allow one to escape rebirth and second death. The universal representation that sickness, infirmity, poverty—in short all that was feared in life—resulted from one's own conscious or unconscious, magically relevant failings was here elaborated into the view that man's fate was his own doing. Appearances all too clearly contributed the idea that ethical compensation comes to each life here and now. The idea of metempsychosis had been developed; close at hand was the conception that merits and failings of past lives determine present life and those of the present life determine one's fate in future lives on earth. This conception was evidently developed by the Brahmans at first as an esoteric doctrine. That man was bound in an endless sequence of ever new lives and deaths and he determines his own fate solely by his deeds—this was the most consistent form of the *karma* doctrine.

To be sure, the sources, particularly inscriptions on monuments, indicate that this was not always consistently maintained. The traditional death sacrifice insofar as it aimed at influencing the dead contradicted this. As in Christendom we find prayers, sacrifices, donations, and construction of buildings in order to raise the merits and improve the future fate of one's ancestors. However, such residues of different conceptions did not alter the fact that the individual was continuously and primarily concerned with the question of how to improve his fate of rebirth. The inscription indeed shows this. One brings sacrifices and establishes foundations to be reborn into similarly good or better

circumstances; for example, to be born again with the same wife or same children; princes wish to reappear in the future in a similar respectable position on earth. And here is to be found the decisive interrelation with the caste order.

The very caste situation of the individual is not accidental. In India the idea of the "accident of birth" so critical of society is almost completely absent. The idea of "accident of birth" is common to traditionalistic Confucians and occidental social reformists. The Indian views the individual as born into the caste merited by conduct in a prior life. The individual Hindu is actually believed to have used or failed to use "foresight" in the choice of his caste, though not of his "parents" as the German joke has it. An orthodox Hindu confronted with the deplorable situation of a member of an impure caste would only think that he has a great many sins to redeem from his prior existence. (Blunt, in the Census Report of 1911, reports an expression of distinguished Hindus to this effect, with reference to the Chamar.) The reverse of this is that a member of an impure caste thinks primarily of how to better his future social opportunities at rebirth by leading an exemplary life according to caste ritual. In this life there is no escape from the caste, at least, no way to move up in the caste order. The inescapable on-rolling *karma* causality is in harmony with the eternity of the world, of life, and, above all, the caste order.

No true Hindu doctrine knows of a "last day." Widely diffused doctrines maintain that there are epochs in which the world, like the Germanic *Götterdämmerung*, returns to chaos, but only to begin another cycle. The gods are as little immortal as men. Indeed, some teachings maintain that a god such as Indra, for example, is but a name for changing and exchangeable personalities. An especially virtuous man may, indeed, be reborn as a god such as Indra. The fact that the devout individual Hindu usually did not realize the grandiose presuppositions of *karma* doctrine as a whole is irrelevant for their practical effect which is our concern.

Karma doctrine transformed the world into a strictly rational, ethically-determined cosmos; it represents the most consistent theodicy ever produced by history. The devout Hindu was accursed to remain in a structure which made sense only in this intellectual context; its consequences burdened his conduct. The *Communist Manifesto* concludes with the phrase "they (the

proletariat) have nothing to lose but their chains, they have a world to win." The same holds for the pious Hindu of low castes. He too can "win the world," even the heavenly world; he can become a Kshatriya, a Brahman, he can gain Heaven and become a god—only not in this life, but in the life of the future after rebirth into the same world pattern.

Order and rank of the castes is eternal (according to doctrine) as the course of the stars and the difference between animal species and the human race. To overthrow them would be senseless. Rebirth can drag man down into the life of a "worm in the intestine of a dog," but, according to his conduct, it might raise and place him into the womb of a queen and Brahman's daughter. Absolute prerequisites, however, were strict fulfillment of caste obligations in this present life, the shunning of ritually sacrilegious yearning for renouncing caste. The commandment "let every man abide in the same calling"—eschatologically motivated in early Christendom—and lasting devotion to one's calling were anchored in the Hindu promise of rebirth and more firmly than in any other "organicist" social ethic. For Hinduism did not join occupational stability to teachings of the moral nature of the person's vocational stability and humble modesty, as do patriarchal forms of Christendom, but to the individual's very personal interest in salvation.

Hinduism is characterized by a dread of the magical evil of innovation. Even today the Indian jute peasant can hardly be moved to fertilize the land because it is "against custom."¹⁷ In addition to this Hinduism places its supreme premium upon caste loyalty. The salvation doctrine of Hinduism promises rebirth as a king, noble, etc., according to present caste rank to the artisan who in his work abides by prescribed traditions, never demands overpay, never deceives as to quality. In the often cited principle of classical teaching: "It is better to fulfill one's (caste) duty even without reward than someone else's no matter how excellently, for therein always lies danger." The neglect of one's caste duties out of high pretensions unfailingly is disadvantageous in the present or future life.

It is difficult to imagine more traditionalistic ideas of professional virtues than those of Hinduism. Estranged castes might stand beside one another with bitter hatred—for the idea that everybody had "deserved" his own fate, did not make the good fortune of the privileged more enjoyable to the underprivileged.

So long as the *karma* doctrine was unshaken, revolutionary ideas or progressivism were inconceivable. The lowest castes, furthermore, had the most to win through ritual correctness and were least tempted to innovations. Hinduism's particularly strong traditionalism finds its explanation also in the great promises which indeed were at stake for the lowly caste whenever the members deviated from their caste.

It was impossible to shatter traditionalism, based on caste ritualism anchored in *karma* doctrine, by rationalizing the economy. In this eternal caste world, the very gods in truth, constituted a mere caste—to be sure, superior to the Brahmans, but as we shall see later—inferior to the sorcerers who through asceticism were provided with magical power. Anyone who wished to emancipate himself from this world and the inescapable cycle of recurrent births and deaths had to leave it altogether—to set out for that unreal realm to which Hindu “salvation” leads. More will be said later about this Indian concept of salvation. We must first consider a different problem.

6. Developmental Conditions of the Caste System

PECULIAR to Hinduism is the combination of *karma* theodicy—to be found elsewhere—with the caste structure. Granted this the question is: from whence is this caste order, found nowhere or only incipiently elsewhere, and why, of all things, in India?

In view of the numerous disagreements among even the most distinguished Indologists and the reservation that accordingly only guesses are possible, some previous observations may be developed further. Obviously, mere occupational stratification per se could not give birth to such sharp segregations. The origin of the castes in liturgical guild organization is neither demonstrable nor probable. The great number of originally ethnic castes, moreover, indicates that occupational differentiation alone is not a sufficient explanation however great its contribution may have been. That ethnic factors alongside status and economic factors were important for the formation of castes is beyond doubt.

The attempt has been made more or less radically to simply equate caste stratification with racial differences. The eldest term for “status,” (*varna*) means “color.” Tradition often distinguishes the castes by typical skin color: Brahmans, white;

Kshatriyas, red; Vaishyas, yellow; Shudras, black. Anthropometric researches, especially those of Risley, have yielded typical degrees of anthropometric differences by caste. Hence correlation has been established. However, one should not assume that the caste order could be explained as a product of "race psychology"—by mysterious tendencies inherent in the "blood" or the "Indian soul." Nor can one assume that caste is the expression of antagonism of different racial types or produced by a "racial repulsion" inherent "in the blood," or of differential "gifts" and fitness for the various caste occupations inherent "in the blood."

Such notions also creep into the discussion of the North American Negro problems. With reference to the alleged "natural" antipathy of races it has been rightly pointed out that several million mixed bloods represent a sufficient refutation of this alleged "natural" strangeness. Indian blood is at least as strange if not more so yet every Yankee seeks to trace Indian blood in his pedigree. If the chieftain's daughter Pocahontas were responsible for the existence of all those Americans who wish to stem from her, she must have had as many children as August the Strong.

At best we can say that race or, better, the juxtaposition of racial differences and—this is sociologically decisive—of externally striking different racial types has been quite important for the development of the caste order in India.¹³ But one must see this in proper causal interrelation.

Only the antagonism of the *Arya* and the *Dasyu* appears in the ancient Vedic period. The name *Arya* remains as a term for the distinguished, the "gentleman." The *Dasyu* was the dark colored enemy of the invading conqueror; his civilization, presumably at least, was on the same plane. The *Dasyu* had castles and a political organization. Like all peoples from China to Ireland the Aryan tribes then lived through their epic period of charioteering, castle-dwelling knights. This knighthood is technically called *Maghavan*, dispensers of gifts. The knights were named by singers and wizards dependent upon their gifts, praising the donator, deriding and attempting magically to damage the stingy. Among the Aryans these singers and wizards played a powerful and in time apparently increasingly important role. "We and the *Maghavan*," "our *Maghavan*" were phrases by which the sorcerers affixed themselves to the knights. Their magic was

brought to contribute a great deal to victory. In the period of the Brahmanas and epics magic mounted in importance to unheard-of proportions.

Originally, the transition between the warrior and priestly (Rishi) gentes was free. In the epics, however, the king Visvamitha had to practice asceticism for thousands of years until the gods, in fear of his magical powers, endowed him with Brahman quality. The prayer of the Brahman procured victory for the king. Like a tower the Brahman overshadowed the king. He was not only a ritualistic "superman," but his power equalled that of the gods, and a king without a Brahman is simply said to be "without guidance" for guidance by the *purohita* was self-understood. Reality often contradicted these claims. In areas conquered by the knights during the early Middle Ages—of pre-Buddhistic times—the present-day Bihar, the knightly community (Kschatriya) did not think of recognizing the Brahmans as their peers.

At first the great patrimonial Hindu kingdoms used the Brahman in support of their legitimation interest. Then the Islamic conquest smashed the politico-military power of the Kschatriya but sustained the Brahman as an instrument of social control. The pretensions of the Brahman in classical literature and the law books were then stereotyped.

There were a number of reasons for the channelization of priestly power into the caste system. Ethnic antagonism takes form with respect to contrasts of external bearing and way of life of various social groups. The most striking contrasts in external appearance simply happens to be different skin color. Although the conquerors replenished their insufficient supply of women by taking women from among the conquered, color differences still prevented a fusion in the manner of the Normans and Anglo-Saxons.

Distinguished families the world over make it their honor to admit only their peers for courting their daughters while the sons are left to their own devices in satisfying their sexual needs. Here and not in mythical "race instinct" or unknown differences of "racial traits" we reach the point at which color differences matter. Inter-marriage with despised subjects never attained full social recognition. The mixture, at least from a sexual union, of upper-class daughters with sons of the lower stratum remained socially scorned. This stable barrier was reenforced by magical

dread. It led to the elevation of the importance of birthright, of clan charisma, in all areas of life.

We noted that under the sway of animistic beliefs positions are usually linked to the possession of magical charisma, particularly power positions of a sacredotal and secular nature. But the artisan's craft in India soon tended to become clan charismatic, finally it became "hereditary." This phenomena—found elsewhere—nowhere appears so strongly as in India. This was the nucleus of the caste formation for those positions and professions. In conjunction with a number of external circumstances this led to the formation of true castes. Charismatic sibs and phratries occupied the conquered land, settled in villages, reduced the conquered to rent-payers or village artisans, agricultural or industrial workers, referred them to the outskirts and *Wurthen*, or into special helot and craftsman villages.

Soon, however, workers from industrial pariah tribes settled outside the villages. The conquerors retained the "right to the land" in a manner similar to the Spartans, as the right to assign a rent-yielding landlot (*kleros*).

In order to understand the process of caste formation one should constantly keep in mind the external resemblance of the situation of the Indian village artisan and of conquered tribes to the place of the helots in the Spartan state regardless of how great the difference was in other respects. The village-dwelling sibs of the conquerors and the conquered stood opposite one another as collectivities. Personal slavery lost importance in view of the fact that the subject (*Shudra*) indeed was a servant, but in principle, not a servant of a single individual, but of the community of the "twice-born."

The conqueror found some presumably quite considerable industrial development among the conquered people. These industries and the sale of products, however, did not develop into local specializations centered around the market and city, but, in reverse, transformed the economy from one of self-sufficient households to production for sale by way of interlocal and interethnic professional specialization. We know the equivalent in primitive form, for example, from von der Steinen's description of Brazil and other studies. The individual tribe, tribal division, or village as a special group engages in tribal industry for markets, producing a special export product, selling the accumulated surplus products of their domestic industry. This may

be facilitated by the near location of raw materials, rivers and other means of communication, by the accidental acquisition of a skill and its subsequent hereditary and secret transmission. The trained specialists turn into journeymen and settle as guest workers temporarily, finally permanently in foreign communities. Such interethnic division of labor appears in very different continents and areas. Of course, considerable vestiges are to be found also in antiquity and the medieval Occident.

The continued predominance of interethnic specialization in India was due to the weak development of cities and urban markets. For centuries the markets were represented by princely castles and peasant villages. In their villages the conquerors preserved their sib cohesion even after they became completely rusticated. This was due to the "racial" antagonisms which provided effective support for clan charisma.

In its initial stages patrimonial fiscalism reinforced this development. Fiscal authorities found it convenient, on the one hand, to have dealings with only a single responsible taxpayer; on the other, to hold the full village associates jointly responsible for tax payments. Fiscal authorities turned first to the old conqueror villages, accepting a guarantee of the tax payment through the joint liability of all full village associates and leaving distribution and disposition over ploughland to their discretion. It is probable though not ascertainable that subject tribes engaging in special industrial activities had to pay tributes in lump sums—this would have stabilized the traditional structure of crafts.

All cities were fortresses of the realm. Guest workers settled in and around them and were placed liturgically, hence usually hereditarily, under a princely supervisor. The artisans consisted of bondsmen restricted to special occupations, leagues of guest workers sharing joint tax liability, or industrial tribes. The fiscal interest of the patrimonial administration in license fees and excise taxes led, indeed, as noted, to a sort of urban market policy similar to that of the Occident. The development of urban industries, particularly urban price work, stimulated the emergence of merchant and craft guilds and finally of guild confederations. These, however, comprised only small islands surrounded by an ocean of village artisan cotters, of tribal industries, of guest trades. By and large, industrial specialization was bound to the developing guest peoples. In the cities, how-

ever, racial and ethnic strangeness of guest artisans led to the segregation of the groups from one another and prevented the multitude of craftsmen from organizing in the manner of the occidental *popolo*. And, finally, nowhere did the fraternization of the citizens per se produce a highly developed military force in the manner of the *polis* of antiquity and the city of the south European medieval Occident. Instead, princely overlords directly stepped into the place of the knights, and they were religiously pacifistic due to the politically neutral character of Indian salvation religions.

With the overthrow of the guilds by the princes, incipient urban developments of occidental stamp were destroyed. Allying themselves with the Brahmins, the patrimonial princes, in accord with the continental nature of India, relied upon the rural organizations as sources for armies and taxes. In rural areas, however, division of labor by guest peoples and old village artisan cotters remained the main line of development. The cities brought only an increase in the number of trades and the establishment of rich merchant and price workers' guilds. In accordance with the *jajmani* principle, the Brahmins and village artisans established a quota regulation of subsistence opportunities and the hereditary appropriation of patronage. Once again the universally accepted principle of clan charisma supported developments. The princely grants of interlocal trade monopolies led in the same direction, for these too were unusually granted to marginal trading peoples. Sib and village exogamy, endogamy of guest tribes, the permanent, mutual segregation of guest peoples sanctioned by ritual and worship, never shattered by religious fraternities of autonomous citizenries ruling the country—all these gave the Brahmins the opportunity to stereotype religiously the given order in terms of ritualistic regulation.

The Brahmins' interest was to sustain their power position which grew out of their ancient monopoly of magical qualities, the means of coercion, and the requisite training and education. Princely prerogatives supplied the Brahmins with the means to suppress the heterodox salvation religions of the urban citizenry, the aspirations of the distinguished merchant and craft guilds. The guilds had often restrained or newly established non-Brahmanical tribal or professional priests who claimed Brahman

rank. The Brahmins defined the autonomy of these associations as usurpation and suppressed them.

The importance of these urban developments is indicated in the very means used by the contemporary anti-Brahmanical, genteel bourgeois castes. First, they aim at abolishing participation in the official temple cult and at restricting themselves to the house-cult. This gives the individual opportunity to choose an agreeable Brahman, thereby, a powerful coercive weapon of the princes and Brahmins, (hence a sort of "interdict") the closing of the temple is voided. A second, more radical means of revolt against Brahmanical authority is to train priests from members of one's own caste and employ them in place of Brahmins. A third consists in the anti-Brahmanical tendency to settle caste affairs, including ritualistic ones, through the *panchayats*, or finally, to settle them in modern caste meetings instead of turning to a *pandit* or a *math* (monastery) for their solutions.

The development of a stratum of magicians into a charismatic estate is, indeed, not peculiar to India. Inscriptions from Hellenic antiquity (Milet) occasionally report a guild of holy dancers as an estate in power. However, there was no room on the soil of *polis* fraternization for the mutual and general religious and ritualistic estrangement of guest artisans and tribes.

Purely professional, hence freely recruited traders and craftsmen occurred only spottily in India and remained dependent on conformism with the ritualistic usages prevalent among the multitude. Such conformism was supported by ritualistic closure guaranteed to vocational associations, the legitimate monopolization of their subsistence opportunities. As in the Occident, patrimonial bureaucracy did not at first hinder, but rather promoted, the closure of trades and guilds. In the first place, the administrations policy was merely to substitute some interlocal association for purely local monopolies of the city economy. The second stage of occidental princely politics, however, namely, the alliance of the princes with capital in order to increase their power against the outside, was out of the question in India because of its continental character and the value of the land tax which could be raised *ad libidum*.

At the time of guild power the princes were financially quite dependent on them. However, the unmilitary urban stratum was in no position to resist princely power once the prince tired of

what seemed to him an outrageous dependency and when he financed the costs of administration by substitution of tax liturgies for capitalistic tax farming. With the aid of the Brahmins, princely patrimonialism successfully mastered the guild citizenry which was at times powerful. Brahmanical theory served in an unequalled manner to tame the subjects religiously. Finally, the invasion and domination of foreign conquerors benefited the power monopoly of the Brahmins. The foreign conquerors divested the most important competitors of the Brahmins of all power because it conceived them to be politically dangerous. Thus the knighthood and the residue of urban guilds were reduced.

The power of the Brahmins, on the other hand, grew during the time of the conquerors. After a period of fanatical iconoclasm and Islamic propaganda, the conqueror resigned himself to accept the continued existence of Hindu culture. Indeed, priestly power under foreign domination always serves as a refuge for the conquered and as a tool of domestication for the foreign overlords.

With the increasing stabilization of economic conditions the ritually segregated guest and pariah tribes were more and more integrated into the expanding caste order which thus became the dominant system. For a thousand years, from the second century of our era to the beginning of Islamic rule, we find the caste system in an irresistible and ever-continued expansion, slowed down through the propaganda of Islamism. As a closed system, the caste order is a product of consistent Brahmanical thought and could never have come to power without the intensive influence of the Brahmins as house priests, respondents, father confessors, advisors in all life situations, and princely officials whose writing skill brought them into increasing demand with the rise of bureaucratic administration.

Ancient Indian conditions, however, provided the structural elements for the caste system: the interethnic specialization of labor, the development of innumerable guest and pariah peoples, the organization of village crafts on the basis of hereditary artisan cotters, the monopoly of internal trade by guest trades, the small extent of urban development, and the flow of occupational specialization into the channels of hereditary status segregation and monopolization of patronage. Likewise the secondary beginnings of liturgical and fiscal organization of occupations

by the princes, and their strong interest in legitimacy and domestication of the subjects encouraged an alliance with the Brahmans and the joint preservation and stabilization by prince and Brahman of the established sacred order of Indian society.

All factors important for the development of the caste system operated singly elsewhere in the world. Only in India, however, did they operate conjointly under special Indian conditions: the conditions of a conquered territory within ineffable, sharp, "racial" antagonisms made socially visible by skin color. More strongly than anywhere else, magical as well as social rejection of communion with strangers was called forth. This helped preserve the charisma of distinguished sibs and established insurmountable barriers between strange ethnic subject tribes, guest and pariah peoples and their overlords even after definitive integration of guest and pariah peoples into the local economic community.

Individual acceptance for apprenticeship, participation in market deals, or citizenship—all these phenomena of the West either failed to develop in the first place or were crushed under the weight first of ethnic, later of caste fetters.

We repeat, however: this well-integrated, unique social system could not have originated or at least could not have conquered and lasted without the pervasive and all-powerful influence of the Brahmans. It must have existed as a finished idea long before it conquered even the greater part of North India. The combination of caste legitimacy with *karma* doctrine, thus with the specific Brahmanical theodicy—in its way a stroke of genius—plainly is the construction of rational ethical thought and not the product of any economic "conditions." Only the wedding of this thought product with the empirical social order through the promise of rebirth gave this order the irresistible power over thought and hope of members and furnished the fixed scheme for the religious and social integration of the various professional groups and pariah peoples.

Where the connection between the theodicy and social order is lacking, indeed—as in the case of Indian Islam—the caste order can be assimilated externally but it remains a *caput mortuum*, fit to stabilize status difference, to represent economic interests through the borrowed *panchayat*, and, above all, to adapt men to the constraint of the social environment; but it is devoid of the "spirit" which nourishes this order on its native soil. On

Islamic ground this order could not have emerged; nor does it exert marked influence over the "vocational ethic" similar to that of the Hindu professional castes. The Census Reports¹⁹ plainly show that the Islamic castes lack some of the most important characteristics of the Hindu caste system, especially ritualistic defilement through commensalism with nonmembers—even though commensalism and social intercourse among different social strata may be avoided and rather rigidly so, as is often the case, after all, in Western society. Ritual defilement, however, must be lacking; the religious equality before Allah of all who profess the prophet precludes it. Endogamy, to be sure, exists but with far less intensity. Properly understood, the so-called Islamic castes are essentially status groups and not castes. Furthermore, the specific anchoring of the vocational ethic in caste is lacking; missing, too, is the authority of the Brahman.

The prestige of the Brahmans which was behind the developing caste system is in part purely magical and in part cultural—deriving from the fact that as a stratum the Brahmans represented a special quality and distinct cultivation. We have still to examine the peculiarity of Brahmanical education and its underlying conditions.

There is a further reason for examining the peculiarities of Brahmanical education. The caste system and *karma* doctrine place the individual within a clear circle of duties and offer him a well-rounded, metaphysically-satisfying conception of the world. However certain and unambiguous this ethically rational world order might present itself, the individual, once he raised the question of the "meaning" of his life in this compensatory mechanism, could experience it as dreadful.

The world and its cosmic social order was eternal and individual life but one of a series of the lives of the same soul. Such lives recur *ad infinitum*; therefore, any one in the last analysis is a matter of complete indifference. The Indian representation of life and the world prefers the image of an eternally rolling "wheel" of rebirths—which by the way, as Oldenberg has observed, also is to be found occasionally in Hellenic philosophy.

It is no accident that India has produced no historiography to speak of. The interest in historically unique forms of political and social relations was far too weak for a man contemplating life and its passage. It is sometimes maintained that alleged Indian "passivity" derives from a climatically determined

“enervation.” This belief is completely unfounded. India has been permanently involved in a state of ferocious warfare and unbridled lust of relentless conquest as no land on earth. However, to any thoughtful and reflective person, life destined to eternal repetition could readily appear completely senseless and unbearable.

It is important to realize that it was not primarily the dread of ever-new life on this earth which is after all so beautiful. Rather it was dread of the ever-new and ineluctable death. Ever and again the soul was enmeshed in the business of living and the heart enchained to things and, above all, to dear ones. Ever again it must be senselessly torn from them through rebirth to be entangled in unknown relations to face the same fate. Such repeated death was truly dreadful. One can hardly fail to feel this and to be moved by the pathos when reading between the lines of the inscriptions the preachings of Buddha and other redeemers.

All salvation religions of Hinduism are addressed to one common question: how can man escape from the wheel of rebirth and thereby ever new death? How is salvation possible from eternally new death and therefore salvation from life? In the following we shall consider the ways of life and their effects on conduct which issued from the answers to this question.

PART II

ORTHODOX AND HETERODOX
HOLY TEACHING OF THE
INDIAN INTELLECTUALS

CHAPTER IV

ANTI-ORGIASTIC AND RITUALISTIC CHARACTER OF BRAHMANICAL RELIGIOSITY

1. Brahmanical, Hellenistic and Confucian Intellectual Strata

THE FACT that the Brahmanical priestly stratum was a distinguished and cultivated nobility, later a class of genteel literati determined its religiosity. As in comparable cases, e.g., the Confucians, orgiastic and emotional ecstatic elements of ancient magical rites were not taken over, and for long periods were either completely suppressed or were permitted only as unofficial folk magic.

As V. Schroder has demonstrated, in individual instances residues of ancient orgiasticism are to be found in the Vedas.¹ Indra's drunkenness and dance, and the sword dance of the Maruts (corybantics) stem from the intoxication and ecstasy of heroes. Moreover, it is obvious that the great priestly soma-sacrifice was originally a cult-tempered intoxication orgy. The much-discussed dialogues of the Rigveda are presumably the slender residues of cult drama.²

However, the official ritual of the Vedas with all its hymns and formulae rest upon sacrifice and prayer and not on typical orgiastic technique—dance emotionality, sexual or alcoholic intoxication, meat orgiasticism—all of which were rather carefully eliminated.

Ritualistic copulation in the fields as a means of securing soil fertility and the lingam cult with its phallic hobgoblins, the *gandharvan*, are very ancient in India. But the Rigveda is mute with respect to them. Nor does the Rigveda know of the corporeal epiphany of deities and demons characteristic of the cult drama. Undoubtedly, even the genteel priestly singers of old

Vedic times,³ and, indeed, the hereditary Brahmanical priesthood viewed it as somewhat vulgar, in part, however, as a dubious competition with their own wizardry which was based on ritualistic knowledge.

In the Vedas the ancient fertility god Rudra, with his orgiastic cults of sex and meat, has a diabolical character. Later he was worshipped as Shiva, one of the three great Hindu gods, on the one hand, as patron of the later classical Sanskrit *drama*, on the other, as god of the ubiquitous lingam cult. While in the Vedas Vishnu is a secondary figure, in the later triad he appears as Shiva's rival and is honored in pantomimes as a great celestial and fertility god, as patron of the dance drama and erotic orgies of the Krishna-cult.

At the sacrifice, the laity was "denied the cup"—only the priest drank soma. The same held for sacrificial meat. While female deities were extremely important for ancient and modern Asiatic folk beliefs, in the Vedas they were completely eclipsed as fertility demons of primarily orgiastic sex cults. In the Atharva-Veda, containing a later canonization of materials probably as old as those of other Vedas, the magical character of dirges and hymns again appeared in place of the cult. This corresponds in part to the derivation of the materials from the private magical "curing of souls" as against the derivation of the materials of the other Vedas from sacrificial offerings on behalf of the body politic. The change is due in part to the increasing importance of sorcery. As the ancient warrior community was thrust into the background by princely power, the noble sacrificial priest of old was displaced by the princely court magician, the *purohita*.⁴

In details the Atharva-Veda is not completely cold toward figures of folk belief (for example, the *gandharvan*). But in it, too, ritual formulae, not orgiasticism and ecstasy, are magical implements. In the Yajurveda priestly sorcery has become paramount. Brahmanical literature ever inclined toward formalistic ritualism. Alongside the Brahman, as in China beside the official with his state cult, we find the house father (*grihastha*) performing important ritualistic duties; thoroughly regulated by the Grihya-sutra. The Dharma Sutras (law books) then drew all social relations of the individual into their compass. Thus, the whole of life became enmeshed in a net of ritualistic and ceremonial prescriptions. Punctiliously to observe them all became, at times, well-nigh impossible.

In contrast to the intellectuals of ancient Hellenic *polis*-culture with whom they must be compared,⁵ (the Brahmins and the intellectual stratum under their influence) were bound by position to magic and ritual. The hereditarily-charismatic priest-nobles of ancient Greece (e.g., the *Butades*) were divested of all substantive influence through the development of the city and came to represent the stupidity of rural gentry (as especially the *eteo-butades*) rather than any spiritual value. The Brahmins, by contrast, have always preserved their connection with sacrifice and magic in the service of the princes.

In all these respects the attitude constellation and conduct of the Brahmins compares with that of representatives of Confucian culture. In both we find a status group of genteel literati whose magical charisma rests on "knowledge." Such knowledge was magical and ritualistic in character, deposited in a holy literature, written in a holy language remote from that of everyday speech. In both appears the same pride in education and unshakable trust in this special knowledge as the cardinal virtue solely determining all good. Ignorance of this knowledge was the cardinal vice and source of all evil. They developed a similar "rationalism"—concerned with the rejection of all irrational forms of holy seeking.

Both Brahmin and Mandarin rejected all types of orgiasticism. Just as the Confucian literati rejected the Taoistic magicians, so the Brahmins rejected all magicians, cult priests, and holy seekers. Their intelligence had not been cultivated by Vedic education and the Brahmins viewed them as unclassical, despicable, and worthy only of extermination. Of course, in neither case (Chinese or Indian) could the implied program be consummated. Though the Brahmins succeeded in preventing the development of a unified organization of unclassical priests, it was at the price, as we shall see, of permitting many hierarchies of mystagogues partly within their own stratum, and therewith a disintegration of unified holy learning into sect soteriologies.

This, and a series of important related differences from Chinese developments was bound up with the different social structures of the respective intellectual status groups. Both passed through developmental stages at times remarkably similar. In the end their external difference appears most sharply. In China the Mandarins form a stratum of officials and candidates for office; in India the Brahmins represent a status group of literati partly

comprising princely chaplains, partly counsellors, theological teachers, and jurists, priests, and pastors. In both cases only a portion of the status group occupied the characteristic positions. As numerous Chinese literati without office prebends earned their bread partly in the offices of the Mandarins, partly in the employment of all sorts of societies, so the Brahman were always employed in most varied positions, including situations of great trust with secular princes. We noted, however, that an actual career in office was not only atypical of the Brahman, but indeed, was contrary to type, while for the Mandarin it was held to be the one thing worthy of men. The typical prebends of the distinguished Brahman were not state-paid salaries and profit opportunities from tax collections and extortion in patrimonial state offices but fixed land and tribute rent. Unlike the prebends of the Mandarins which were subject to recall and at best granted for a short term, the Brahman's rents were permanent grants for life or for several generations or forever to individuals or organizations (monasteries, schools).

The external situation of the Chinese and Indian intellectual strata appears externally most similar when one compares conditions of the period of the Warring States in China with those in India of about the time of the ancient Jatakas or again of the medieval expansion of Brahmanhood. At that time in India the Hindu intellectuals largely constituted a stratum of men educated in literature and philosophy and dedicated to speculation and discussion of ritualistic, philosophical, and scientific questions. In part they formed schools who were withdrawn in meditation, in part they wandered between princely and noble courts. Despite all schisms, in the last analysis the Brahman considered themselves to be a unified group of cultural representatives. They were advisors to single princes and nobles in private and political questions, organizers of states on the basis of correct doctrine. This is quite similar to the literati of China in the time of Warring States. There always remained, however, an important difference.

The highest Brahman station in ancient times was that of court chaplain; later, and to the time of British rule the senior in rank and consulting jurist, that is, the Brahmanical chief *pandit*, was the first man of the land. The Chinese literati of all philosophical schools gathered around the imperial supreme *pontifex* who was their consecrated chief as the living vessel of

the sacred tradition. According to the claims of the literati, this *pontifex maximus* was also the sole legitimate secular ruler, the *lord paramount* of all secular princely vassals of the Chinese "church-state."

Nothing equivalent existed in India. In this epoch of innumerable splinter states the literati faced a plurality of petty princes without a legitimate *lord paramount* from whom to derive their power. The concept of legitimacy was rather simply that the single prince was ritualistically correct when and to the extent to which his behavior, especially toward the Brahmans, conformed with the holy tradition. Otherwise he was held to be a "barbarian" just as the feudal princes of China were judged by the yardstick of their correctness as defined by the teaching of the literati. But no matter what power an Indian king might yield in matters of ritual he was never at the same time a priest.

Obviously this difference between Indian and Chinese history goes back to earliest and but hypothetically accessible times. Even the ancient Vedic literary tradition describes the dark-skinned opponents of the Aryans in contrast to themselves as "priestless" (*abrahmana*). With the Aryans, however, we meet the beginnings, along with the prince, of the independent priest, trained to perform sacrificial rites. In contrast, the oldest tradition of the Chinese knows nothing of independent priests standing beside a strictly secular prince. Among the Indians the role of the prince has apparently grown out of strictly secular politics, out of war expeditions of charismatic warrior chieftains, whereas in China it grew out of the role of supreme priest. It may well be impossible ever to advance even to hypothetical assumptions concerning the historical events explaining the establishment of this ever-important contrast between the unity or duality of political and priestly prerogatives. The same difference, indeed, is also found with quite "primitive" peoples and empires even in direct contiguity and otherwise identical culture and race. Originally it would seem to have been brought about by quite concrete, thus "accidental" circumstances which once established continue to influence developments.

The different configuration of political and theocratic power was highly consequential in every respect. First, externally, it was important for the social structure of the intellectual strata of both China and India. In the time of the Warring Kingdoms the Chinese literati were still, as a rule, recruited from the

ancient, "great" charismatic families, though personal charisma of written knowledge was already so significant that parvenus increasingly appeared in ministerial positions. When the imperial *lord pontifex* again managed to unite the plenitude of secular prerogatives in his own person the monarch, as *supreme pontifex*, could, corresponding to his interest in power, link admission to office to the purely personal qualification of correct literary education. Thus he was able definitively to secure patrimonial rule against the feudal system. The literarily trained became primarily a bureaucratic stratum.

In India the opposition between gentile charisma and personal charisma was not completely settled even in historical times. However, it was always the learned priesthood, which defined the qualification of the novitiate. With the full assimilation of the Brahmins to the Vedic priest-nobility, the question of charisma was decided at least for official doctrine. By the time of the first universal monarchies, the independent priesthood had become so firmly established in its possession of spiritual authority as a charismatic guild, that is to say, as a "caste" with fixed educational prerequisites for office holding, that it could no longer be shaken.

In the Yajur-Veda this position (which appears first in the Atharva-Veda) of the Brahmins is visualized completed. "Brahman," meaning "prayer" in the Rigveda is now "holy power" and "holiness." The Brahmanas merely carried this further, we read: "The Brahmins who have learned the Vedas and teach them, are human gods."⁶ No Hindu prince or great king was able to claim pontifical power and the later-Islamic-foreign rulers were disqualified for it from the first, and were far from raising such claims. The point of Cathapatha Brahmana, resting on these contrasts in social structure, are the respective "world views" of the Chinese and Indian intellectuals strata with their consequences for ethical conduct.

In China theocratic patrimonialism and a stratum of literati aspiring to public office was the appropriate basis for a social ethic of pure utilitarianism. The "welfare-state" idea, with a strong materialistic turn issued from the charismatic responsibility of the ruler for the external, meteorologically-conditioned well-being of the subjects. Besides this, however, it followed from the place of the literati with its social philosophical interests and pride in education opposite the unlearned masses.

After all, philosophical men can do no better than strive for material welfare, and material position is also the best means for maintaining peace and order. Finally, the idea of the welfare state followed also from the rentier ideal of the very bureaucracy, the securing of fixed income as basic to the gentleman's way of life. The status opposition between the cultured and uncultured and reminiscences of liturgical provisions for needs led to ideas approaching "organic" theories of state and society. Naturally, such ideas suggest themselves to any political welfare organization. However, the levelling effects of Chinese patrimonial bureaucracy tended to restrict such notions.

Not the organic status group structure, but the patriarchal family provided the dominant image for social stratification. The patrimonial bureaucracy could recognize no other autonomous social force. The stronger and more independent the actual functioning organizations, particularly the guilds and guild-like societies and the sibs, the less could theory use them as a basis for an organic social structure. Theory simply bypassed them as mere factual data. Hence in China the "vocational" ideal type of organismic view of society existed only in beginnings and remained alien to the ruling stratum of genteel literati.

2. *Dharma and Absence of the Concept of Natural Law*

THINGS were quite different in India. Here the priesthood, holding its own beside the political rulers, had to take into account the sovereign world of political power. The priests recognized the autonomous rulers of this world simply because they had to. As we saw, the power relation between Brahmans and Kshatriyas was quite unstable for a long time. Even after the status superiority of the Brahmans was theoretically established, the prerogatives of the great kings, who had meanwhile risen to power, remained independent and essentially secular. Indeed, the duties of the kings as against the Brahmanical hierarchy, like those of any status group, were determined by their *dharma*, which formed part of Brahmanically regulated holy law. But this *dharma* differed for every status group, hence also for the kings. Though according to theory only the Brahmans could give authoritative interpretations, kingly *dharma* self-evidently represented a unique and independent type which was by no means identical with that of the Brahman.⁷

There was no universally valid ethic, but only a strict status compartmentalization of private and social ethic, disregarding the few absolute and general ritualistic prohibitions (particularly the killing of cows). This was of great moment. The doctrine of *karma* deduced from the principle of compensation for previous deeds of the world, not only explained the caste organization but the rank order of divine, human, and animal beings of all degrees. Hence it provided for the coexistence of different ethical codes for different status groups which not only differed widely but were often in sharp conflict. This presented no problem. In principle there could be a vocational *dharma* for prostitutes, robbers, and thieves as well as for Brahmins and kings. In fact, quite sincere attempts at drawing these extreme conclusions appeared. The struggle of man with man in all its forms was as little a problem as his struggle with animals and the gods, as was the existence of the positively ugly, stupid, and—from the standpoint of the *dharma* of a Brahmin or other “twice-born”—positively objectionable. Men were not—as for classical Confucianism—in principle equal, but forever unequal. They were as unlike as man and animal. All men, however, had equal opportunities, but not in this life. Through rebirth they could either achieve heaven or descend to the animal kingdom or to hell.

The conception of an “original sin” was quite impossible in this world order, for no “absolute sin” could exist. There could only be a ritual offense against the particular *dharma* of the caste. In this world of eternal rank orders there was no place for a blissful original state of man and no blissful final kingdom. Thus there was no “natural” order of men and things in contrast to positive social order. There was no sort of “natural law.” But there was, in theory at least, only holy, status-compartmentalized positive law in areas which remained unregulated as indifferent. There were positive statutes of princes, castes, guilds, sibs, and agreements of individuals. All the problems which the concept of “natural law” called into being in the Occident were completely lacking. There simply was no “natural” equality of man before any authority, least of all before a super-worldly god.

This is the negative side of the case. Most important, it excluded forever the rise of social criticism, of rationalistic speculation, and abstractions of natural law type,⁸ and hindered the development of any sort of idea of “human rights.” Animals and gods, at least, in consistent elaborations of doctrine, were only

different, *karma*-conditioned incarnations of souls, thus common "rights" were obviously out of the question and could exist for these beings as little as common "duties." The concepts "state" and "citizen," even that of "subject" did not appear. Only status *dharma* was recognized—the rights and duties of kings and other castes to themselves and others.

As patron of the *rayat* (client), the Kshatriya had the ascribed *dharma* of "protection" essentially in the sense of defence against the outside. The Kshatriya was also responsible for the administration of justice and integrity of trade and related matters. Such ethical commandments were his *dharma*. For the rest it was the primary duty of the prince, as for others, but particularly for the prince, to support and further the Brahman, especially by sustaining their authoritarian regulation of the social order according to holy right, not to tolerate attacks upon the Brahman's station. The struggle against anti-Brahman heterodoxy is clearly required and it did occur. But this in no way altered the place of the prince, and politics retained their autonomy in a peculiarly significant manner.

Chinese literature in the epoch of the contending princes recognized (at least in theory, however ineffectual it may have been in practice), the concept of "just" and "unjust" wars and an "international law" as an expression of common Chinese culture. The *imperial pontifex*, once in the position of autocrat, claimed dominion over the world including barbarians. He conducted only "just" wars. Any resistance against him was rebellion. If he succumbed, this was symptomatic of the loss of heavenly charisma and forfeiture of right to rule.

Things were similar for the Indian prince. When he was defeated or when his subjects were unfortunate for long, this was proof of magical offences or of charismatic deficiencies. Hence success of the king was decisive. But this had nothing to do with his "right," only with his personal fitness and particularly the magical power of his Brahman. The Brahman's sorcery rather than the king's ethical "right" procured kingly success, that is, if the Brahman knew his craft and was charismatically qualified. As in the Occident, in India the knightly conventions of epic Kshatriya times established certain status customs for the feud and breaches were held to be objectionable and unchivalrous. To be sure, Indian knightly combat probably was never practiced with such far-reaching courtesies as represented

by the famous herald's call of the French knighthood to their opponents before the battle of Fontenoy: "*Messieurs les Anglais, tirez les premiers.*" On the whole the opposite prevailed. In the epics not only men, but even the gods (Krishna) with perfect equanimity waive the most elementary rules of knightly combat in order to win. And as in the Hellenic *polis* of classical times,⁹ so the princes already in the epic of the Maurya epoch and more so in later times practiced as a matter of course the most naked "Macchiavellianism" without objections on ethical grounds.

The problem of a "political ethic" has never preoccupied Indian theory and in the absence of ethical universalism and natural right, it could hardly be otherwise. The *dharma* of the prince¹⁰ was to conduct war for the sake of pure power per se. He had to destroy his neighbor by cunning and fraud and no matter what crafty, unknightly, and ruseful means, by surprise attack, when in distress through instigation of conspiracies among his subjects and bribing his trusted friends. He had to keep in check and tax his own subjects through spying agent provocateurs and a sophisticated cunning and suspicion. Here power politics (and to our mind quite unholy egotism of princes) were practiced for their own sake. All political theory was a completely oral technology of how to get and hold power. It went far beyond what was familiar and average practice for the *signores* of the early Italian Renaissance in these respects and was completely devoid of all "ideology" in our sense of the word.

3. Knowledge, Asceticism, and Mysticism in India

EXPEDIENCY obtains in all profane areas of life. It is typical of Hinduism, in contrast to the anti-professionalism of Confucianism, to do justice in their own terms to the informing spirit of most varied spheres of life and knowledge, promoting the development of special science. Thus it was that alongside important mathematical and grammatical contributions they developed especially a formal logic as the technology of rational proof (*hetu* with the derivative *hetuvadin*, the logician). A special philosophical school, Nyaya¹¹ (founded by Gotama) occupied itself with the technology of the syllogism and the

magical techniques as the scorned arts of sorcerers while the Brahmans were by background and nature priests, i.e., magicians. This was the historical condition of the very different place asceticism and mysticism held for both.

Confucianism scorned magic as a parasitical humbug contrary to the distinguished man's sense of dignity. The mandarin rejected magic as completely useless and barbaric. In the period of free-office holding by the literati, in the time of the warring princes, anchoritism and the contemplation of philosophers blossomed. The effects were never completely eradicated from Confucianism. However, with the transformation into a certified status of office prebendaries such nonutilitarian ways of life were increasingly rejected as unclassical. Reminiscences of mysticism accompanied Confucianism only as shadowy heterodox counter-images. Asceticism, moreover, disappeared almost completely. Finally, the few important orgiastic residues in folk religiosity in no way changed the eradication, on principle, of these irrational forces. In contrast, Brahmanhood was never able completely to shake off the historical relation to ancient magical asceticism out of which it had grown. The name of the novice (*bramacharin*) is derived from magical novitiate chastity and the stipulation of contemplative forest life, so to speak, a form of retirement for the aged (today appearing as a mitigation of the original custom which presumably signified the killing of the old), stems from the same source.¹⁵ In classical sources¹⁶ they are extended to the two other status groups of the "twice-born" but were originally characteristic only of magician asceticism. Both prescriptions (novitiate chastity and contemplative forest life) are today and have indeed long been obsolete. However, their place in classical literature remains. And, finally, contemplative mysticism as a type of gnosis remains the crown of the classical Brahmanical style of life, the goal of every well-educated Brahman though the number of those who actually pursue it was as small in the medieval past as today.

We must examine more closely the place of Brahmanical culture with respect to asceticism and mysticism and, as far as the context makes it indispensable, also certain related philosophical representations growing out of the culture. The Hindu salvation religions, including Buddhism, arose on the basis of such philosophic conceptions, partly in typical opposition to them, but, in any case, only in close relation with them.

Technically, Indian asceticism was the most rationally de-

China, sophisticated Indian eroticism, lyrics, and even drama hallowed her.²⁴

Alongside the relatively "ascetic" features of the Brahman's regulated workaday life stands the rational method for the achievement of extraordinary holy states. Indeed, there was a school (Mimamsa, founded by Jaimini) held to be orthodox, which acknowledged ceremonial good work per se as the holy path. But this is not the case for classical Brahmanical teaching. In classical times the following was fundamental: ritual and other virtuous deeds alone could merely help improve rebirth chances but could not lead to salvation. This is always dependent on extraordinary behavior qualitatively extending over and beyond the duties in the world of the castes: namely, ascetic flight from the world and contemplation.

The development of such salvation doctrines signified essentially, as is to be expected of intellectuals, a rationalization and sublimation of the magical holy states. This proceeded in three directions: first, one strove increasingly for personal holy status, for "bliss" in this sense of the word, instead of for magical secret power useful to professional sorcery. Secondly, this state acquired a definitely formal character, and, indeed, as was to be expected, that of a gnosis, a sacred knowledge essentially though not exclusively, based on apathetic ecstasy, which corresponded best with the status characteristics of the literati stratum. All religious holy seeking on such a foundation had to take the form of mystical seeking of god, mystical possession of god, or, finally, mystical communion with the godhead. All three forms, preeminently however, the last named, actually appeared. The union with the godly came to the fore because the development of Brahmanical gnosis increasingly moved in the direction of depersonalizing the supreme godhead. This occurred partly in correspondence with the inherent tendency of all contemplative mysticism, partly because Brahmanical thought was moored to ritual and its inviolability, hence saw divine majesty in the eternal, unchangeable, impersonally lawful order of the world but not in the stages of its destiny. The earlier precursor of Brahma was originally the "Lord of Prayer," the functional deity of magical formulae. With the enhancement he rose to divine supremacy just as the earthly prayer masters, the Brahmins achieved highest status rank.

culture. Similarly in the time of the city- and castle-dwelling Kshatriya knighthood, the Brahmans were cultured representatives of the transformed and widened cultural orbit of North India. This is quite equivalent to the Chinese literati in the time of Warring Princes. Initially Brahmanical knowledge could not maintain this. Later it rather supplemented the education of knightly youth with elements of Vedic knowledge. It thus gained an unmistakably strong influence over the lay mind.

Despite all sharp antagonisms of the philosophical schools which first emerged, the Brahmans preserved their status cohesion throughout the individual Indian states. As Hellenic gymnastic-musical education, and only this, distinguished Hellene from barbarian, so Vedic-Brahmanical education qualified the civilized man, corresponding to the presuppositions of classical Indian literature. An *imperial pontifex*, found in China as symbol of cultural unity, and in Islam and the Christian Middle Ages, was lacking in India as in classical Greece. Both were cultural communities only by virtue of social organization (caste here, the *polis* there) and by virtue of the education of their intellectual strata.

In contrast to Greek development, in India the homogeneity of the intellectuals was assured by the Brahmans. For the rest, Brahmans and laymen, as representatives of the philosophy, stood alongside one another, like the monks and secular clergy and, with the beginnings of humanism, increasingly also cultured lay persons in the Occident. As the epics still plainly show, lay circles were not alone and perhaps not even pre-eminently responsible for the decomposition of the ancient unbroken Brahmanical religious philosophy. The sceptics (*tarkavadins*) with whom the Mahabharata deals as with godless babblers and covetous sophists, peddling their antiBrahmanical wisdom all over the country, correspond actually to the Hellenic sophists of classical times. They were in fact wandering ascetic teachers stemming from a Brahmanical school (Nyaya) which as such was recognized as orthodox and developed the syllogism, rational logic, and dialectical art as a special learning.

4. Sramana and Brahmanical Asceticism

THE Brahmans were as little able to maintain the monopoly of personal mystic holy seeking as that of philosophy and science.

They certainly claimed it. This was because mystical holy seekers, especially the anchorites, in India as elsewhere, were considered to be possessors of holy charisma and even revered as saints and wonder workers, giving them a power the Brahmins wished to monopolize for themselves. Until the present, official theory wished to recognize as full *sramana* or *samana* (hermit) among *sadhu* (monks)²⁷ only the *sannyasi* in the early sense of the word,²⁸ that is, those who transferred out of the Brahmanical caste to the life of the monk. Orthodox teaching always rigorously reaffirmed this Brahmanical monopoly, most sharply, of course, against the lower strata.

In the Ramayana an ascetic of great miraculous powers has his head cut off by heroes because he is a Shudra and has nevertheless dared to assume these superhuman capabilities. This very passage indicates, however, that even according to orthodox learning in the time of the epics the Shudra was capable of achieving magical powers through asceticism. And the monopolistic claim never given up officially, was never completely effective in practice.²⁹

Indeed, it cannot even be fully ascertained whether the later organization of the actual monasteries (*math*) were first undertaken by Brahmanical *sramana* or only introduced in imitation of heterodox institutions. The first possibility cannot be excluded, as the Brahmanical hermit upon achieving the quality of *yati* (full-ascetic) always appeared (1) as teacher and (2) as magical helper in time of need, gathering scholars and lay admirers around him. However, it is questionable how far one can rightly speak of monks and cloisters in pre-Buddhistic times. In addition to the old ascetic, early tradition, indeed, recognizes the hermit and isolated professional ascetic. Likewise, for otherwise the establishment of certain teachings would not have been possible, it certainly knew, the "school" as a community, later called "*parishad*."

According to late Hinduistic rules, the school should comprise twenty-one trained Brahmins; in earlier times, however,³⁰ it often had but three to five. In one account³¹ the disciples go on strike against their Brahman who wishes to take on more students. At the time that could have no longer been the rule; yet it indicates how far Brahmanhood of pre-Buddhistic times still was from engaging in mass propaganda. Philosophical speculation and science was developed by the hermits and secular priests

with their personal pupils, partially by the formally organized schools. The later cloister (*math*) was, as a systematically diffused mass phenomenon, first found in the time of competing sects and professional monkdom. Nevertheless, the transition from the philosophical school to the monastery was fluid, considering the ancient asceticism of the novices (*bramacharin*), at least if the teaching tradition adopted a boarding-school type of education which could be very old.

The school or quasi-monastic organization was secured by foundations and primarily provided opportunities for the Brahmans to devote themselves to learning without having to secure a livelihood. Also, where later, prebends were appropriated, the (hereditary) allotment to the ancient school or group of monastic prebendaries was frequently prerequisite to being a caste or subcaste member of full Brahmanhood: that is to say, to that stratum of Brahmans qualified for performing rites—correspondingly for accepting *dakshina* (fiefs and foundation grants). Other Brahmans were held to be lay persons and did not enjoy these all-important privileges of full caste members.³¹

The form of the later normal monastic organization as well as the kind of monkdom in general appears also to suggest as the historical point of departure a formally free school community of teachers and pupils with that following among the laity who through support and gifts to the community sought to win advantages for itself now and in the hereafter.³² Apparently the systematic organization into communities with fixed rules was still lacking. Purely personal relations formed the basis of cohesiveness, so far as such was present. Ancient Buddhism itself shows, indeed, traces of this patriarchal structure, as we shall see. The bonds of piety which bound such a holy teacher and spiritual advisor, the *guru* or *gosain*³³ to his students and clients, was in Hindu ethics so extraordinarily strong, that these relations could have and must have been basic to almost all religious organizations.

Each *guru* enjoyed an authority over his students superior to that of the father.³⁴ If he lived as a *sramana* the *guru* was an object of worship by the laity (hagiolatry). For, according to undoubted doctrines, right knowledge supplied magical power. The Brahman's curse was fulfilled if he had proper knowledge of the Veda and, given the case, he preferred to test it by a fire ordeal. The holy gnosis enabled him to perform miracles.

Famous wonder-working *gurus* may well have bequeathed to their descendants their dignity as teachers by virtue or gentile charisma, or they may have designated their successors. Election, determination, and acclanation of the qualified charismatic leaders by the disciples served only as an expedient. At least in the time of the Upanishads, it was assumed that only a *guru* could impart proper wisdom. Hence quite a few identifiable founders of philosophical schools and sects have left behind them hierocratic dynasties, which often for centuries elaborated the founders' learning and technique of gnosis. To this day innumerable (usually small) monasteries and quasi-monastic³⁵ communities in India are to be found which, so far as they maintain organizational interrelations, primarily followed the system of branch establishment in agreement with charismatic principles as did the cloisters of our Middle Ages in Cistercian times: Hindu monkdom developed out of wandering magicians and sophists.³⁶ It remained at all times largely an itinerant mendicancy. Formally the monk was usually free to resign³⁷ from the monastery and in principle could do so any time. The discipline of superiors (*mathenats*) and the monastic rules and regulations therefore were often lax and relatively loosely defined.³⁸

Given the nature of Hindu holy ways, whether orthodox or heterodox, any sort of work duties of monks could hardly exist.³⁹ No monk labored. The substantive rules for the monk's way of life were partially mere prescriptions of order such as prohibitions against wandering during the rainy season and instructions concerning tonsure and other externals. Otherwise, they represent an intensification of routine Brahmanical asceticism partly simply in degree, partly, however, also in nature and meaning. The last was determined by the interrelation with Brahmanical holy doctrine as developed in the Brahmanas and Upanishads.

The following represent merely intensifications of routine asceticism: the command of chastity; abstinence from sweet nourishment (confining nourishment to fallen fruit); the complete propertylessness; the prohibition of storing goods; and living from begging (later usually under restriction to accept only the remains of the donor's meal); the commandment to wander (later often intensified by the injunction to sleep only one night in a village or not to sleep there at all); the restriction of clothes to bare necessities.

The command of *ahimsa*, that is, to spare life absolutely of all creatures appears in some of the salvation religions in extreme form. Apparently, it was already honored prior to this among classical Brahmanical ascetics only with varying degrees of strictness. This command (*ahimsa*), however, was more than a mere quantitative sharpening of anti-orgiastic vegetarianism and did not merely flow from the restriction of eating sacrificial meat by the priests.⁴⁰ Rather, the religio-philosophical belief in the unity of all life evidently played a decisive part. To this came the universal diffusion of the worship and therewith immunity of the cow as an animal conceived to be absolutely pure. Animals also belonged to the sphere of *samsara* and *karma*. They also had, each according to its kind, their *dharma* and hence each was able, in its peculiar manner, to practice piety.⁴¹ The way in which self-control, i.e., the control of eyes and mouth, was enjoined, was at first but disciplinary in nature, but commands such as to do nothing for one's bodily or spiritual welfare were determined beyond this by the general philosophic conception of asceticism as a holy path.

5. Brahmanical Writings and Science

THIS transformation of classical Brahmanical asceticism from magical to soteriological ends was consummated in the religious literature in the wake of the Veda collections, namely, the Brahmanas which deal interpretatively with sacrifice and ritual and especially the following Aranyakas "works created in the forest." They are products of the contemplative, elderly Brahmins living in the retirement of forest retreats. The speculative sections, the Upanishads, "secret teachings" comprise the decisive soteriological parts of Brahmanical wisdom.⁴² (They represent *juan-akanda*, that is, gnosis in contrast to *karma-kanda*, the knowledge of ritual.) The Sutra literature contains the ritual prescriptions for practical use: the *Srautacakra*, the holy ritual, the *Smarta-cakra*, the ritual of everyday life (*Grihyasutra*), and the social order (*Dharmacakra*).⁴³

This whole literature differs essentially from the Confucian. First, in some externals: the Brahmins, too, were in a specific sense "scholarly scribes." Also Hindu holy literature, orthodox Brahmanical at least, is written, as is the Chinese, in a sacred language strange to the laity,⁴⁴ that is, Sanskrit. However, Hindu

intellectual culture was far less a purely written culture than Chinese. The Brahmins (and most of their competitors) have for an extraordinarily long time adhered to the principle that holy doctrine may only be transmitted orally. The specific literary character of Chinese intellectual life is to be explained in terms of the early impact of official courtly chronicalism and calendar-making, even when written symbols still were in the form of hieroglyphs. Further, it is to be explained in terms of administration based in principle upon written documents. This was lacking in India. Court procedure was oral and forensic. Speech always was an important means in the pursuit of special interests and power. Through sorcery one sought to secure victory in debate,⁴⁵ and all Hindu-influenced culture is familiar with religious disputations, with speech contests for prizes and debating exercises of students among its characteristic institutions. While Chinese writing addressed itself as a hieroglyphic, calligraphic art to the eye and ear at the same time, Indian speech was, above all, addressed to the (acoustic, not visual) memory. The ancient rhapsodists were succeeded by the *vyasas* (compilers) on the one side, but the speculative Brahmins on the other. Both were later replaced by poets and reciters who elaborated the *kavya* forms, combining story-telling with instruction. These poets were partially *pauranikas* and *aithiasikas*, story-tellers of edificatory myths, myths for an essentially intellectualized urban public; partially, they were *dhampatakas*, the reciters of the law books, who probably took the place of the ancient law speaker (and with Manu and in the epics had a stake in commissions for expert opinions on doubtful cases). In about the second century A.D. out of these reciters there developed the guild of Brahmanical pundits, essentially a class of learned scribes. In any case, oral tradition and recitation played the main role into the Indian Middle Ages. In contrast to Chinese sacred literature, this had important ramifications.

All holy Indian literature (including Buddhistic) was fashioned for easy memorization and ready reproduction. It employed for this purpose, in part, the epigrammatic formulae, as in the ancient philosophical and Sutra literature which was learned by ear, the teacher providing the urgently required commentary. Versification was partially used, being prevalent in a large portion of the nonphilosophical literature. Extensive use was made of the refrain—unending literal repetition of a

train of thought or of prescriptions with modification only of a single sentence or word in the respective strophe according to the progression of the discussion. Besides, number schematism and the play on numbers was utilized to an unusual extent; a Western teacher can hardly consider this application of numbers as anything else. Finally, however, rhythm was utilized as a quite pedantic system of presentation.

In its beginnings this kind of Brahmanical writing was probably determined primarily by memorization requirements. In connection with "organismic" peculiarities of Indian rationalism this style has been pushed to a mannerism, determining the whole nature of what are for us the most important aspects. In Chinese constructions brief, functional "rationalism" of linguistic means was conjoined to plastic, aesthetic elements of hieroglyphic script. It sought the charm of the epigram yet linguistically made a sober impression. Against this, in Indian religious and ethical literature, appears a luxuriant growth of incredible bombast serving only an interest in systematic completeness.⁴⁶ The Western reader is wearied by endless accumulations of ornamental adjectives, comparisons, symbols, great figures to cultivate the impression of grandeur and dignity, and by luxurious phantasies. A difficult journey is in store for the Western reader once he leaves the world of the Rigveda and popular fable, which are gathered in the *Panchatantra* and are the sources of almost all the fables of the world, or when he leaves the world of secondary art drama and lyric to enter the field of religious poetry and philosophical literature. Most of the Upanishads not excepted, the Western reader will find a mass of quite implastic, because rationally intended, symbols and images alongside inwardly dry schematism; and only at long intervals may he chance upon the fresh source of a truly and not apparently dead insight. The hymns and prayer formulae of the Vedas could not be changed because of their proven magical efficacy. Their original quality was preserved in the tradition. In contrast, the ancient epics of chivalry were taken over by the Brahmans and inflated into an unshapely code of ethical paradigms. The Mahabharatha is in form and content a manual of ethics in terms of examples—no longer a poem.

This peculiarity of specifically Brahmanical, but also similar heterodox Indian religious and philosophical literature which contains abundant thoughts, which the European thinker, too,

will appraise as absolutely profound, contributed its part to those internal impediments which prevented further development. The Apollonian quest for absolute conceptual clarity did not develop the theory of knowledge beyond the very noteworthy beginnings of logic of the Nyaya school. This was partly due to the deflection of rational endeavor toward pseudo-systematization which, in turn, was codetermined by the technique of the ancient literary tradition. The sense for the empirical, plain, and sober fact was stifled through essentially rhetorical habituation to the search for significance in phantasy beyond the realm of facts. Yet, Indian scientific literature made excellent contributions in the fields of algebra, grammar (including declamation and drama and to a lesser extent metric and rhetoric). There are noteworthy contributions to anatomy, medicine, (excepting surgery, but including veterinary science) and music (*tosolfal*). Historical science, however, for previously noted reasons, was altogether lacking.⁴⁷

Indian natural science in many areas arrived at a level which Western science had attained about the fourteenth century. Unlike Hellenic science it did not even come near the beginnings of rational experimentation. In all disciplines, including astronomy, developed for ritual purposes, and in mathematics (outside of algebra), Indian science measured by the standards of occidental science has essential achievements to its credit. It had the advantage of not having to contend with certain prejudices of Western religious ideas, i.e., the belief in resurrection which blocked the dissecting of corpses,⁴⁸ and an interest in the sophisticated control of the psychosomatic apparatus implementing the technique of contemplation. Western science did not raise such questions nor have such interests. In India all science of social life remained in the form of a policing and cameralistic technology. This can well compare with the contributions of our seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century cameralism. Considering natural science and technical philosophy, however, one has the impression that noteworthy developmental beginnings were somehow hindered.⁴⁹

All these natural science studies were also in large measure undertaken only to serve purely practical purposes (therapeutic, alchemistic, political) and the technology of contemplation. Moreover, natural science in India as in China and elsewhere lacked the mathematical thought of the Hellenes, their imperish-

able legacy to modern science. Even apart from all this, the custom of rhetorical and symbolical pseudo-systematization clearly contributed to this restriction.

The other most important restriction issued from the focus of attention of Indian thought. In the last analysis it was indifferent to the actualities of the world, and, through gnosis, sought the one thing needful beyond it—salvation from it. This perspective was formally determined by the techniques of contemplation of the intellectual strata.

CHAPTER V

ORTHODOX HINDUISM

1. Holy technique (Yoga) and the Development of Religious Philosophy

LIKE ALL methodologies of apathetic ecstasy, technologies of contemplation were based on the same theoretical principle the Quakers formulated, that "God only speaks in the soul when the creature is silent." In practice this doubtless rests on the ancient magical experience of auto-hypnosis and related psychological states, and is induced by physiological effects of controlled regulation and temporary stoppages of breathing and its reaction upon brain functions. The emotional states resulting from such practices were valued as holy and cherished as blissful removal of the soul. They formed the psychological basis of the philosophical holy teachings which in a framework of metaphysical speculations sought rationally to establish the significance of these emotional states.

Among the many varieties of techniques for inducing apathetic ecstasy, one stands out by the fact that it was championed by the orthodox philosophic school of Yoga. Yoga signifies exertion, asceticism, and represents the rationalization of ecstatic practice (of ancient sorcerers). It is not intended here to analyze the details of this much discussed phenomenon.¹ Originally it was a practice of specific lay asceticism. The Krishna Hero is alleged to have imparted this technique to Vivasvat, the tribal god of the Kshatriya caste and he in turn to the old sages of the warriors. It is necessary to mention this here because variations of Yoga appear in orthodox as well as heterodox teachings. It gained greater influence than any other equivalent technology representing the characteristic holy technique of the intellec-

tuals. Whether it actually had its main origin inside or outside Brahman circles can hardly be decided. Historically it was diffused beyond these circles. In time it was superceded by the classical Brahmanical holy technique, and today Yogins form a stratum of magicians without Vedic education. While they are not large in numbers they are widely distributed. Since the Brahmans do not recognize them as their peers, the Yogins—corresponding to a developmental type described earlier—constitute a caste of their own.²

The Yoga technique places central emphasis upon controlled breathing and related means of inducing apathetic ecstasy. In this connection it concentrates the conscious psychic and mental functions upon the partly meaningful, partly meaningless flow of inner experiences. They may be endowed with an indefinite emotional and devotional character, but are always controlled through self-observation to the point of completely emptying consciousness of anything expressible in rational words, by gaining deliberate control over the inner motions of heart and lungs, and finally, auto-hypnosis. Intellectually, Yoga technique presupposes that the grasp of the godly is an irrational psychic experience available by irrational means which allegedly have nothing to do with rational, demonstrable knowledge.

Classical Brahmanical intellectualism has never completely accepted this view, for it places knowledge per se in the center of all holy means. In the first place, this includes knowledge of rituals peculiar to the Brahman guild. The salvation-seeking Brahman, however, beyond this, sought the metaphysical, practical gnostic interpretation of its cosmological meaning. This conceptual goal developed gradually out of the rationalization and sublimation of holy practices. As in other religions the right (ethical) intention displaced mere externally correct conduct, so in Brahmanism, corresponding to the specific prestige of wisdom and thought, the right idea became paramount. As Oldenberg has pointed out, certain thoughts were presented to the officiating Brahman performing certain rites as prerequisite to the magical efficacy of the rites. Right thought and right knowledge were held to be the sources of magical power. Here as elsewhere, such knowledge did not retain the character of ordinary common sense. The supreme good could be achieved only through a higher knowledge: a gnosis.

Yoga technique, on the other hand, sought primarily to achieve

magical states and miraculous power. Thus, for example, one sought the power to suspend gravitation and to gain the ability to float around. Moreover, one sought to gain omnipotence with power directly to realize imagined events without external action by virtue of the magical will power of the Yogin. Finally, omniscience was sought, that is, clairvoyance, especially of other men's thoughts.

Classical Brahmanical contemplation, however, sought the blissful rapture of a gnostic comprehension of the godly. All intellectualized holy techniques had one of two purposes: either (1) through the emptying of consciousness they attempted to make room for the holy, which then is more or less clearly felt because it is incommunicable; or (2) by combining internally isolating techniques, which concentrated meditation, they sought to achieve a state experienced not as feeling but as gnostic knowledge. The opposition is not sharp, but classical Brahmanical contemplation in agreement with the nimbus of wisdom, was unmistakably inclined to the second, so much so that the Nyaya school could even consider its pursuit of empirical knowledge as the holy path. This, of course, hardly corresponded to classical Brahmanical type which is firmly convinced of the metaphysical nature of gnosis. Hence it cherished mechanical meditation techniques of achieving "institution" as a psychic experience never to be gained via empirical proof. It therefore never completely rejected Yoga practices. In fact, Yoga was in its way also a supreme form of a specific, intellectualistic conquest of the godly. For the feelings intended through ever higher levels of concentration (*samadhi*) first had to be experienced with the greatest possible consciousness. To achieve this the sentiments of friendship (to God), sympathy (for creatures), beatitude, and, finally, indifference (toward the world) were planfully and rationally pursued in the self through meditative exercises. Thus only the highest step is catalepsy. Classical Yoga rejected the irrational mortification, the *atha Yoga* of pure magical asceticism. It was, for its part, a rationally systematized form of methodical emotional asceticism, and therein somewhat comparable to the exercises of Ignatius. Its systematization essentially represented a level of rationalization superior to that of contemplation. The latter, however, was more rational with regard to the intended "set," namely, knowledge, not feeling, was sought.

2. *Orthodox Salvation Doctrines*

IN THE end, classical Brahmanical teaching could never completely reject as heterodox the virtuoso-like self-mortifications of world-fleeing anchorites, because they too upheld the magical character of the gnosis. Furthermore, in early times the popular prestige of the *tapa* as a means of compelling the gods was unshakable. Brahmanical teaching preferred the temperate means of a contemplation technique only for the ordinary Brahman, so to speak, the "secular priest." The historical origin of devout concentration upon the sacred prayer-syllable *om*³—cannot be ascertained. The mechanical repetition of this magically efficacious word assists in emptying the consciousness of worldly thoughts. Use of this device prevails in orthodox as well as in heterodox soteriologies of India. In addition to this technique there are others with similar functions. The purpose is always to free one's self from the world of the senses, from anxieties, passions, drives and striving, and the purposeful considerations of everyday life, thereby preparing one's self for a final state signifying eternal rest (that is, the salvation [*moska*, *mukti*] from these pressures) and unison with the godly.

No eternal heavenly existence comparable to the Christian paradisaical beatitude could appear as a goal in the classical soteriology of India. To the minds of its exponents the idea of eternal rewards and punishments for deeds and omissions of a creature in this ephemeral life would naturally have appeared to be stupid nonsense contradicting all ethically balanced and just compensation. The individuals could sojourn in Heaven only a finite time for finite merits.⁴ Moreover, the Vedic as also, later the Hindu gods were as little virtuous as men. They differed primarily in being more powerful. Thus, heaven could hardly be the final aim of Brahmanical salvation-striving. In the realm of experience the soul was only truly detached from the world in deep and dreamless sleep. Where, at such times, was the soul sojourning—who could know? It was certainly not entangled at such periods in the vanities of the world. Hence it probably was sojourning in its extra-worldly home.

All salvation technologies of India stemming from the intellectual strata, whether orthodox or heterodox, involve a withdrawal, not only from everyday life but from the world in general, including also paradise and the world of the gods. Since

residence in paradise is but for a finite time one must tremble in fear of the moment when the surplus of merits is used up, for one must inevitably enter upon a new rebirth on earth.⁵ Moreover, the gods are subject to the magical influence of properly utilized ritual. In this sense they are inferior, not superior, to the wise man who knows how to coerce them. They are as little eternal as men, their desires are as passionate and they behave like men. Hence they cannot be identical with that godhead pursued in their exercises by the technicians of salvation. In classical form Brahmanical salvation is always absolute salvation from the world. This differentiates it from all Chinese attitudes toward the world, including that of Lao-tzu and the other Chinese mystics.

The extreme radicalism in this denial of the world was determined by the world image of Indian religious philosophy which in its consistency left no choice other than yearning for salvation. The quest for salvation did not reject suffering or sin or the imperfection of the world, rather it rejected transitory nature.

Transitoriness adheres to everything, whether available to sense perception or to man's imagination as earthly, heavenly, or hellish forms and things. It is a quality of the world of forms as a whole. The world is an eternal, meaningless "wheel" of recurrent births and deaths steadily rolling on through all eternity. Only two nontemporal realities are discoverable in it: the eternal order itself, and those beings who, through escape of on-going rebirths, must be conceived as their subjects. They are the souls.

The central concern of all Hindu philosophy⁶ was with the structure and relation of these beings to the world and the godhead. The one and only question of Hindu philosophy was: how could souls be untangled from the web of *karma*—causality tying them to the wheel of the world? An absolute presupposition of Hindu philosophy after the full development of the *karma* and *samsara* doctrines, was that escape from the wheel of rebirth could be the one and only conceivable function of a "salvation."

This conclusion, so fraught with consequences, was, of course, only gradually attained and, even then, it was by no means universal. Even though the *karma* and *samsara* doctrine have become the general property of Hindu thought, the concept of an impersonal godhead and the un-createdness of the world have not. Indeed, as a rule, the last was accepted even where people believed in personalized gods of the world.

The later cosmologies, such as are contained in the Puranas, ordinarily visualized the world as evolving through a series of ages. In the Vishnu Purana the various ages designated as Krita, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali unceasingly follow one another. In the Kali-age the upper castes disintegrate; the Shudra and the heresies come to the fore, for Brahma is asleep. Vishnu then assumes the form of Rudra (Shiva) and destroys all existent forms: the twilight of the gods sets in. However, then Brahma awakens in the form of Vishnu, the merciful god, and the world begins anew.

The early cosmologies either do not know such supreme deities or recognize them under different names and plural forms in a way of no interest here. Of more importance is the change of thought pattern. Very slowly the early, personal god-father and creator of the world (*prajapati*) has been displaced by the impersonal Brahman principle, originally the magical prayer-formula, then a magical world potency. There was, however, a growing tendency for this potency, in turn, to be endowed with the traits of a personalized, super-worldly god—Brahma—who, according to classical learning, no longer has created the world out of nothing. The world, rather, has emanated from him or appeared by individualizations. His supra-divine nature was perhaps established for theory by the fact that as the functional god of prayer, he could not himself be subject to the magical compulsion of prayer. Below the circles of philosophically schooled Brahmanical intellectuals, in fact, in their very midst, there always reappeared in some form the actually unclassical belief in a supreme, personal-creator God over and above the crowd of local and functional deities—the *ekantika dharma*—(we would say, “monotheism”). With this appeared belief in saviors and salvation in paradise.

Yoga, particularly, with its irrational asceticism and the personal emotional character of its holy states did not, at least in the form given it by Patanjali, eliminate the personal supreme God (*Isvara*, “ruler”). Of course, in strict logic his existence was hardly consistent with *karma* and *samsara*. Indeed, the question properly arose as to the consistency of the ideas of creation and reign of this world belabored with suffering, torment, and vanity and a supreme god. Alongside less consistent solutions to this question (in the Maitrayana Upanishad) the answer appears as follows: the supreme being called this thing to life for his own

diversion and enjoyment. Nietzsche occasionally gives voice to the conception of the "artist-god" with the negative moralistic pathos which often betrays an embarrassing residue of bourgeois philistinism even in some of his greatest passages. Its intentions was to expressly renounce any "meaning" of the empirical world. A powerful, and at the same time, kind God could not have created such a world. Only a villain could have done so. This, in crystal-hard clarity, was the teaching of Samkhya philosophy.⁷

On the other hand, the orthodox assumption of a possible salvation of souls from the wheel of rebirth would certainly have led to the concept of a temporarily finite world. If not in this form, it would have led to the conception of an end to the process of unceasing rebirths under the assumption of a finite number of souls. Actually, to escape this conclusion the most consistent school⁸ posited an infinitude of souls. Thus the redeemed ones who had attained beatitude were not only, as in Christianity, a remnant, but this number became infinitesimally small. The pathos of this representation necessarily worked toward utmost enhancement of the religious individualism characteristic of all mystical holy seeking, in the attainment of which the individual can and will, in the last analysis, help only himself. What could be the sense of any salvation task in the face of an infinitude of souls? Apart from the belief in predestination the religious solitude of the single soul has never been placed on such a sounding-board as in this conclusion from Brahmanical doctrine. In polar opposition to the belief in election by divine grace, this doctrine left it entirely to the individual soul to work out its own fate.

The basic teaching of the entire theory of salvation, namely, transmigration of souls and ethical compensation, were, as already mentioned, also only gradually developed. In the Brahmanas the first was still quite undeveloped.⁹ The second only made its appearance in the Upanishads. Once conceived under the pressure of rational requirements of theodicy, these teachings decisively influence the interpretation of all ascetic and contemplative holy striving. It is these teachings which isolate the transitory nature of earthly things as the essential reason for the devaluation of the world. They also establish the idea that the manifold nature of the world, its forms and individuals, is the decisive sign of its apostasy or at least remoteness from Brahma (and no longer, as it once was, his creation). Consistent exten-

sion of these ideas imparts to Brahma the quality of impersonal oneness and—as this vanished behind the phenomenal pluralism of things—at the same time, the hidden negation of the world.

Also, ethically this was decisive for the quality and meaning of the devaluation of the world. In fundamental contrast to Christianity, sin and conscience could not be the sources of holy seeking. In popular thinking sin was a kind of magical-daemonic affair as was *tapas* (asceticism). In the Rigveda it was the trespass of commandments under the protection of Varuna.¹⁰ In later literature the conception was completely eclipsed by that of “evil.” It was not evil that devalued the creature but metaphysical worthlessness of the transitory, death-consecrated world and the fact that wisdom is weary of its senseless bustle.

The closer Brahmanical philosophy approached this standpoint the more its central theoretical question concerned the nature and ways of individuation and their sublimation.

Indian philosophy essentially represents a theory of the metaphysical structure of the soul as the vehicle of individuation. According to a widely-held version, the breath was originally considered to be the substance, so to speak, of the immaterial, of the “psychic” and “mental” in men. The originally related concept “*atman*,” therefore, represents the sublimation of such ideas into the concealed, immaterial, magical unity of the “self.” In the Mudeka-Upanishad¹¹ the inner self still consists of “breath” which also in the Khandogya-Upanishad is conceived as something special in contrast to all other organs indispensable to life. In these sources it is already incorporeal. In this last source there is also found the “astral” body of a spiritual self.¹² In the Maitrayana-Upanishad¹³ it becomes simply “what a man thinks that he is.” Thoughts alone cause the cycle of rebirth when oriented to the world rather than to the Brahma.

Thought simply has magical power: “With knowledge, belief, and Upanishad one makes the sacrifice work,” say the Upanishads. The single but important step toward identifying this magical agent of self-conscious individual life with the magical world potency, the Brahman, was already consummated in the esoteric doctrines of the early Upanishads. The famous passage in the Khandogya Upanishad (I, 1, 10) in which the teacher conducts the student through the realm of the living from the seed of grain to man, unceasingly calling attention to the inwardly turned “fine essence” of life, “by virtue of which all

exists that has a self" (the Indian conception of "entelechy") with the constant refrain—"that is the essence that is the self—and that, O Svetakatu, is thou (*tat tyam asi*)," belongs to the most striking formulations of old Brahmanical wisdom.

The close relation of classical Brahmanical thought to magic hindered the transformation of the concept of the highest world potency into a "substance" as occurred in Hellenistic philosophy. This development readily suggests itself and is almost consummated in the advance passages. However, it could not occur, for the prestige of magical power was firmly established for Brahmanical thought. From this vantage point one can readily understand why all materialistic speculation was sharply rejected as heterodox. It would have led in a similar direction.

On the other hand, the rationalization of apathetic ecstasy into meditation and contemplation, as the (Yoga) technique of self-concentration, once carried out consistently awakened special and unsurpassed capacities among virtuoso-like, consciously intellectualistic Indians,¹⁴ for various psychic processes of the self, particularly feeling states. The habituation of one's self to an interest in the events and processes of one's psychic life at the same time that the self is turned into a disinterested observer was achieved through Yoga technique.¹⁵ This must have quite naturally led to conceptions of the "I" as an entity also standing outside all "spiritual" processes of consciousness, and, indeed, outside the organic depository of consciousness and its "narrowness."¹⁶

Similar to the Chinese dualism of *Yang* and *Yin*, the duality of world potencies appears therefore in the early Upanishads as sources of individuation. The masculine spiritual principle, the *purusha*, is entangled with the feminine principle, primordial matter, the *prakriti*. Therein the undeveloped, materially conceived psychic and mental powers of the empirical world are slumbering. They include, particularly, the three basic powers of the soul, the three *gunas*: *satva*, namely, divine brightness and benevolence; *rajas*, human striving and passions, and *tamas*, bestial darkness¹⁷ and stupidity. We are not concerned here with the way in which they interpenetrate almost all Hindu literature, including the later literature. All conceivable modes of internal behavior in the usual schematism and pedantic-fantastic manner were reduced to the operation of mixtures of these three powers. More important is the fact that already in the Upanishads,

purusha appears as the spectator who takes no active part in the business of the world and the soul as conjured up by the *prakriti*. But, of course, his part as spectator is to "endure" life, so long, at least, as he lacks insight into the interrelation, and finds himself with the erroneous belief that he acts himself and that his interests are the hub of his entire psychic life. Of course, as soon as he attains wisdom and views the *prakriti* and her doings for what they are, she will behave "like a woman from a good family, when seen naked": she will withdraw and leave him at liberty for that eternal immobile tranquility peculiar to his nature.

With these conclusions Brahmanical speculation found itself faced with several important difficulties which adhere to mysticism in general, but especially to gnostic mysticism. For one thing, from such mysticism no ethic for life within the world could be deduced. The Upanishads contain nothing or almost nothing of what we call ethics. For another, salvation through gnostic wisdom alone came into sharpest tension with the traditional content of holy writing. The gnostic doctrines led to the devaluation not only of the world of the gods but, above all, of ritual. From what has been said one can infer that essentially the orthodox remedied the situation through "organic" relativism. There is no universal "ethic," but only a status- and professionally-differentiated *dharma* according to caste. Surely one could and should not forego all and every formulation of a general teaching of virtue for the gentleman (*Arya*). The law books particularly (the books of house ritual, the *grihyasutras*) could hardly dispense with such. The eight virtues, once ten in number, are unusually colorless. Forbearance, patience, freedom from envy, purity, tranquility, correct life, freedom from desire, and freedom from covetousness are the eight good qualities of the soul in Gautama's law book (the oldest, perhaps pre-Buddhistic). The virtues listed by Manu are given a somewhat more positive turn: contentment, patience, self-control, nonstealing, purity, control of desire, piety, knowledge, truthfulness, and freedom from anger. These were also condensed into five commandments for all castes: to injure no living being, to tell the truth, not to steal, to live purely, to control the passions. Quite similar commandments appear as the first step of Yoga.

In all this the tension between this concept of salvation and Vedic ritual was by no means settled by such commandments.

The questions for the layman in search of salvation remained as to the value of Vedic ritual when he did not qualify for training in gnostic wisdom. It is to the merit particularly of E. W. Hopkins to have shown how these questions run throughout classical literature. For its agents, the Brahmins could hardly allow Vedic ritual to be deprecated, at least in the eyes of the laity. The books of house ritual (*grihyasutras*) remained all-important.

For the law books, too, the Vedic gods and sacrifices, the heavens and hells as means of compensation and punishment remained the decisive and mostly ultimate realities of man's life. Ancestor worship remained a central concern. While in the Upanishads ritual—the most important being the ancient, political soma-ritual of the knightly cult—was allegorically reinterpreted, there is no mention of this in the books on house ritual and law for which the fire ritual of hearth and home was of central concern.

In the course of the rationalization of early Brahmanism a "father god," *prajapati*, had been postulated as reigning over the many functional gods of the world. Only in esoteric thought was the impersonal "Brahman" moved into central location as world potency. The creation of the figure of Brahma as a supreme personal deity was, then, a concession to lay needs. However, this position was not uniformly sustained in the law books. Indeed, Brahma was accepted as a supreme deity and for the most part, as has been justly observed, often treated as identical with *prajapati*. But even then and later he was increasingly conceived as *roi fainéant*. Atman is, and indeed as a cult object, represented in the law books in the sense of philosophy, while the house rituals understandably make little of this idea. At least in the law books *samsara* and *karma* are taken as self-evident presuppositions, coming more into the foreground in the later books. The means of religious discipline, however, consist of a longer or shorter sojourn in hell and heaven, in addition to joy and good fortune of the ancestors in the beyond in the case of virtue, in contrast to their misery in the beyond in the case of evil deeds of the successor.¹⁸ It goes without saying that when misery is caused by the successor the vengeance of the ancestral spirit is upon him.

In agreement with the significance of ancestor worship and, thus, of progeny for the death peace and ancestral bliss, an

especially delicate question was posed: whether one could be permitted to be a *sramana* without having first produced progeny. Even if one believed it to be no longer needful to perform ancestral sacrifices in behalf of one's self, one must not leave his forebears unprovided for by successors.¹⁹ Thus the law books generally take as self-evident the fact that the individual must pass through all the marital stages to attain merit in the beyond. With this emerged the conception that continued life or "immortality" consists in nothing else but continued existence in one's own progeny.²⁰ It may be noted that there were Brahmans who taught that an ascetic need not necessarily be a householder before taking up monastic life. There are occasional protests against this and against "wisdom" in general as the supreme holy path, and the sophistical hair-splitter is declared to have forfeited salvation²¹ even as the man given to worldly pleasure. On the whole, however, the phenomenon is accepted as real and rules for the monks were given which were rather similar to those of heterodox (Jain) monks.²² If a stand is taken at all it is roughly the following: there are simply several paths and also several goals of holy seeking. The monk strives for other-worldly personal holiness, while the ritually correct lay persons, remaining in the world, seeks this-worldly holiness now and rebirth for his forebears and descendants.

It is one of the most important and extraordinary of phenomena that the holy seeking of the *sramana* thus succeeded in breaking through the magical sib bonds of ancestor worship. This is to be explained only by one circumstance—that no one doubted the magical powers which the ascetic possessed. In India, and this is the most important contrast to China, the prestige of the *sramanistic* magical charisma outweighs the duties of piety to the family.

Today no one can say when this development occurred and against what obstacles. Probably things were in flux generally since the colonizing advance into Northern India went on during the entire Brahmana period, necessarily loosening family ties. This, perhaps, facilitated the development. Perhaps only then was the situation wide open for the unchecked formation of Brahmanical schools and ascetic communities, for monasteries and the philosophers' mystic quest for salvation.

Philosophical holy teaching, known as *cruti*, that is, "salvation," in contrast to *sriti*, i.e., "traditional ritual," has accepted

the relativization of the holy paths according to intent and the personal charisma of the holy seeker. The gods are present and they are powerful. However, their heavenly world is transitory. By means of correct ritual the laity may join them. So, too, may he who properly studies the *Vedas*, because his mental power does not suffice for more. However, whoever has the charisma of gnosis can escape this world of ephemeral things. If gnosis is the highest soteriological means its substance may develop along two separate courses.

Either it is knowledge of the material-psychic-mental processes of reality as a world of the qualitatively particular, which is the forever becoming and passing away in contrast to the eternally unchangeable and quality-less self; the heterogeneous, but actually existing from which the self turns away. Then, the dualism of the knowing self and known matter (including the so-called "mental processes") is taken as the basic metaphysical fact.

Or knowledge is "gnosis" in a much more specific sense: the world of reality of eternal growth and decay simply cannot be "true." It is an appearance (*maya*), a phantasmagoria presented through the enchantment of knowledge by a daemonical creature, the demi-urge (Isvara). Thus *maya* "creates" the world. Reality is not an attribute to this apparent growth and decay, but of being which, in all this semblance of change, remains self-identical. Naturally, this is a transcendent reality; it is divine being; it is Brahman. By means of the organs of knowledge (belonging to the realm of semblances) this Brahman issues through individuation in the individual mind. When, by means of knowledge, this cosmic illusion is destroyed emancipation from suffering under this illusion is consummated. Once having attained gnosis the mind is no longer needful. The mind can be brought to this state only by suitable means for gnosis is no ordinary knowledge but a "possession."

The peculiar religious difference of both conceptions which is in practice more important than the formal theoretical contrasts, thus rests on this conception of the illusory nature of reality. Liberating knowledge can be attained only by a mystical reunion of the spirit, which has been individualized only through its cosmic illusion, with the divine All One, Brahman. For the dualistic points of view, recognizing reality as true, a Brahman is, in the last analysis, superfluous for the successful holy seeking attained through systematic schooling of knowledge in the

sense of Yoga practice. Thus the dualistic doctrine does not concern itself with the Brahman and is, in this sense, "atheistic": the soul sinks into eternal dreamless sleep, but it doesn't vanish. Monastic Brahman doctrine might be called "pantheistic" if one intends this rather inappropriate term to cover adequately the quite specific metaphysical "superworldliness" of the Brahman as the truly real opposite for cosmic semblance.

The dualistic doctrine of reality was elaborated by the Samkhya school; which Kapila first systematically established. The monastic doctrine of cosmic illusion is known under the name of "Vedanta." Samkhya teaching is already anticipated in the Upanishads and is without doubt older and, before the Vedanta-doctrine, the classical philosophy of Indian intellectuals. This is proven by its relation to Yoga which technique furnished the preconditions for its constructions. Its age, moreover, is testified to by the influence it had on the formation of the early sects and heterodoxies, including Buddhism. Further proof is found in the fact that important parts of the Mahabharata were clearly first elaborated under the influence of Samkhya doctrines and only later revised in terms of Vedanta. Finally, also, external circumstances may be adduced, such as the time of the oldest systematic editorship²³ of the doctrine. Finally, the fact remains that still in the daily water libation of the Brahmins, Kapila and the ancient Samkhya-saint are called upon.

Vedanta which was written down²⁴ in the Brahmasutras of Badarayana, and later commented upon by Gankara, the pre-eminent philosopher of the school, later became the classical system of orthodox Brahmanical Hinduism. This is certainly not astonishing. The proud denial of any form of belief in God, and the acknowledgment of the reality of being in Samkhya doctrine were inevitably more congenial to a stratum of cultured Brahmins and lay intellectuals drawn from knightly circles in the time before the development of the great kingdoms, than it could be to pure priestly caste, especially when this caste stood under the protection of the great patrimonial kings. For this priestly caste the existence and mystical access to godly power was of central interest. It was able to bring its teachings easily into harmony with the presuppositions of Vedic literature, a goal which can be seen from its very name (Vedanta meaning end, conclusion of the Veda).

We must resist the temptation to analyze more closely the

conceptions of Vedanta though they are sublime in their way. In our context only the most general presuppositions are significant. We must avoid conceiving these tensions merely as rational elaborations of "pessimistic, word-rejecting" emotional dispositions such as is to be found among the Hellenes and which appears in ancient Brahmanical and even old Vedic literature. As a truly fundamental emotional disposition, however, it is first found in the late Upanishads.²⁵

The great Indian doctrinal systems represented proud and rather rational conceptions of thinkers who were consistent in their ways. The mystic nature of the holy, so strongly determining their teachings, resulted from the internal situation of a stratum of intellectuals who as thinkers face life and ponder its meaning but do not share its practical tasks as doers. The kind of orientation, sensitivity, and "world feeling" that resulted was only in part derived from their rational image of the world. It was in part also determined by striving after holiness through contemplation. When, in one of the Upanishads²⁶ the three cardinal virtues of the Indian are named as self-control, generosity, and compassion, the second may be seen to be of knightly, the first of Brahmanical origin. "Compassion" however, was clearly the product of a worldly euphoria typically bound up with apathetic mystical ecstasy and later elevated to universal ethical significance in Buddhism.

Among the six official orthodox Veda-schools²⁷ Samkhya and Vedanta were so outstandingly important that the metaphysics of the rest can be ignored here. Also we are concerned with the doctrines of both great schools only insofar as they determined practical ethics in a manner important for our context.

The "orthodoxy" of all six schools was expressed in the fact that they recognized the authority of the Vedas, that is to say, as stated earlier, they did not dispute the binding character of ritual duties developed in Brahmanical literature and did not attack the position of the Brahmins.

The orthodox philosophic schools²⁸ have always recognized the pluralism of holy paths (*marga*). Ritual works, asceticism, and wisdom were the three they recognized as classical from the beginning. However, only the last two led beyond the bounds of the *karma*-chain. This holds above all for wisdom. This wisdom was gnosis, "illumination," for which the expressions "*Bodhi*" and "*Buddha*" occasionally appear. We have already

seen its magical meaning, especially for the Yogins. Its soteriological significance lay in its capacity for dissolving the unfortunate linkage of spirit and matter, the "materialization" (*upadhi*) of the "I." The state of complete dematerialization or elimination of all "material basis" (*upadhi*) was designated later as *nirvana*,²⁹ a psychic state which sets in when all relation with the world has been severed. In extra-Buddhistic representation it is not, as in ancient Buddhism, equated with the complete "blowing away" of all individuality, but with the end of suffering through restlessness. It is not the extinguishing of the flame, but a steady smokeless and nonflickering burning, such as occurs when all the winds have ceased.³⁰

Nirvana and similar states of bliss (designated by other words) are not necessarily other-worldly in the sense that they can be entered upon only after death.³¹ Quite the contrary, they are sought in the present, as results of gnosis. The perfect attainment of gnosis imparted to the classical *sramana* the one important quality, the Hindu *certitudo salutis*. According to Hindu metaphysics this meant two things: first, already in the present it afforded the enjoyment of bliss.³² Vedanta particularly placed decisive emphasis on this earthly joy attained through unison with Brahma. It also meant a this-worldly emancipation from the *karma*-chain. Through perfect knowledge the redeemed *jivanmukti*³⁴ escapes the ethical compensation mechanism. "No act clings to him." This means that he is "sinless" in the Hindu sense. "The question no longer torments him: what have I done for good and evil?" From this, the anomistic position, the conclusion, so characteristic of mysticism, has been drawn that ritual no longer binds him, for he stands above it and can do anything³³ without endangering his holiness. This conclusion suggested itself to the metaphysical thought of the Samkhya-school but was not confined to it for it was also drawn by the Vedantists (for example, in the Taittiriya-Upanishad).³⁵ However, such conclusions seem not to have met with universal recognition. This is quite understandable for the devaluation which ritual suffered thereby was felt to be too fundamental a loss.

However, such representations may well have played quite a part in encouraging the emergence of the heterodox-nonritualistic salvation religions. Indeed, all mysticism as independent salvation of the self, because of just such consequences, usually

sions, and above all, withdraw from the company of all men save those possessing wisdom.

Of course, even ancient Hinduism did not lack the experience of all virtuous religion, that of the unequal religious qualifications of men. According to the Samkhya doctrine it results from the dispositions of the organ of thought (belonging to *prakṛiti*): *aviveka* (nondiscrimination) is the obstacle to omniscience which varies in strength according to constitutional endowment. Meanwhile, through concentration (for which, later, the device of Yoga was borrowed), one can master this obstacle. According to pure Samkhya doctrine social acts were valueless for salvation. Even the recognition that the fulfillment of ritual duties also had positive value for holy striving seems to have been accepted only late by this teaching and in consequence of the influence of lay thought.

Vedānta-teaching has always esteemed rites and "work," i.e., traditional social duties as a valuable for salvation striving. In place of the ancient concept *rita*, this concept for the cosmic order derives from the inviolability of ritual, and at the same time represents the real basis of all being (hence it is close to the Chinese Tao-concept); in classical and later literature the concept of *dharma* came to the fore. For the single person this meant the binding "path" of social-ethical behavior, "duty." It was a concept which, in turn, tended to signify the "cosmic order." This turn was due to the increasing need for priestly regulation of the inner-worldly duties, especially ritual duties of the laity. Also Vedānta possessed the idea that the correct fulfillment of external duties of ritual and particularly sacrificial duties indirectly facilitated the attainment of right wisdom and not that they were themselves a path to salvation. According to classical Vedānta they are quite indispensable in this indirect sense. Also according to Vedānta, only he who has attained perfect wisdom and therewith bliss has no more use for the rites.

3. *Holy Teaching and Professional Ethic of the Bhagavadgita*

IF EVERYDAY duties and the holy path to Brahmanical understanding thus had been brought into a reasonably satisfactory mutual relation of organic stages, this solution was in no way satisfactory for the needs of the educated laity. This was particularly true for the knighthood. While the Brahman could

pursue meditation alongside his ritualistic everyday profession as its meaningful enhancement inside the real or the extraordinary, or as an esoteric supplement, and, above all, could find these internally reconcilable, the warrior could hardly do so. His status *dharma* was irreconcilable with any sort of escape from the world. However, he was hardly disposed therefore to see himself treated as religiously inferior. The tension between everyday-*dharma* and holy striving partly contributed to the establishment of those heterodox salvation religions to be discussed later, and, partly, however, to a further development of soteriology within the orthodoxy.

This further elaboration of the soteriology is our concern for two reasons. On the one hand, its beginnings can be ascertained at a time preceding the establishment of the heterodoxies or, at least, contemporaneous with them.³⁶ On the other hand, this soteriology still bears characteristic traits of the ancient soteriology of the intellectuals, of course, in the only transmitted form, already bound up with beginnings of the later cult of a redeemer. Its classical literary source is, of course, the Mahabharatha (in definitive edition dating from about the sixth century B.C.), and especially one of the philosophical dialogue insertions with which this work abounds—introduced by priestly hands into a compendium of ethics. Obviously, they represent—at least in part—reminiscences revised and adapted by priests and residues of the discussions of the problem of theodicy³⁷ which took place in cultivated high society of the Kshatriya at the time of the petty princes. On the one hand we encounter residues of the belief in “fate” and an arbitrary play of chance with men,³⁸ a belief close to all warrior heroism. It is a belief which can hardly be harmonized with the *karma*-doctrine without difficulty. Further, especially in the conversations of King Yudhischthiras with his heroes and with the Draupadi, we encounter discussions of the “justice” of the fate of the individual hero and of the “right” of war. Many of them indicate that the purely autonomous (Machiavellian) conceptions of the *dharma* of princes resulted only in part from the political conditions of the later *Signorie*-epoch and partly from consistent Brahmanical ratiocination. In detail, and somewhat in the manner of the Book of Job, King Yudhischthira of the Epic in his blameless misfortune discusses with his spouse the reign of God.³⁹ The woman comes to the conclusion that the great God only plays with men according to

his whims. A genuine solution is as little found here as in Job: one should not say such things, for by the grace of God the good receive immortality and, above all, without this belief the people would not practice virtue.

This has quite a different ring from the philosophy of the Upanishads which knows nothing of such a world regime by a personal God. It is taken over from the ancient father-God of the Brahmanas, who stands above the unethical deities of the Vedas. This borrowing was partially conditioned by sectarian religions with their personal gods and which experienced a revival during the time of the final revision of the epic. Brahma, personally conceived in this context, is identified with *prajapati*. The Vedic gods also are all to be found, but they are powerless. The hero does not fear them. They cannot even help him, they can only cool his forehead and admire him. He is himself—for example, Arjuna—a God's son. But the father-God too causes him little concern. He is convinced of the meaning of "fate," also he externally commits himself to the philosophy of the Brahmanas.⁴⁰ The ancient Valhalla, India's warrior heaven, is, it seems, his true goal and therefore death on the field of honor, death which here as elsewhere is amenable. At least in one place it is stated that this is better than asceticism and the land attainable through asceticism. Virtue, gain, and pleasure are what man seeks, and action is better than doing nothing. Since the hero also practiced asceticism and since the power of the ascetic and the significance of holy knowledge is completely fixed for him as well, this pure heroic ethic can only be one aspect of the matter. So it is in fact.

The question of the ethical implications of hero *dharma* and war is discussed at length in the very famous episode belonging to the repertoire of every story-teller and known by the name of Bhagavadgita.⁴¹ Externally it represents a discussion directly preceding the bloody battle between opponents related by blood, between the Hero Arjuna, who is concerned during battle about the justice of killing such close relatives, and his chariot master Krishna, who successfully disputes such worries. Krishna, however, is viewed already by the poet as a human incarnation (*avatar*) of the supreme divine being, the Bhagavat (the majestic) and we already find ourselves on the ground of those epiphanies which dominated the unclassical, folk savior religiosity of later Hinduism. The characteristic emotional traits

of this religiosity so important for the India of the Middle Ages—to be discussed later—were still in their beginnings.⁴² In the most central points we meet with the product of the genteel intellectual stratum of ancient times.

The point is justly taken that there was an ancient community of Bhagavata worshippers who championed the kind of soteriology rendered by the Bhagavadgita.⁴³ As Garbe has proven, Samkhya doctrine formed the basis for the original version. Only later were correct Vedantic features added through a classicist Brahmanical revision. Then the poem was accepted as an expression of orthodox thought. This historical status of the figure of Krishna is disputed. While occasionally (even as Buddha before the documentary proofs of his historical personality) he has been held to be an ancient sun God, outstanding scholars have maintained that he was, rather, the deified author of the Bhagavata religion.⁴⁴ Nonspecialists cannot settle the matter. However, there are no compelling reasons against the simplest assumption: that the form has been taken from the ancient epic tradition and has been worshipped by the Kshatriya as a hero of their estate. The essential features of the Bhagavadgita holy doctrine in its present form may now be reviewed.

Upon close inspection it may be seen that to Arjuna's thoughts against fighting close relatives in battle, Krishna answered with several rather heterogeneous arguments. Firstly,⁴⁵ the death of these enemies was decided anyway and would occur even without Arjuna's doings. Moreover,⁴⁶ Arjuna's Kshatriya nature would drive him into battle even without his will; this being beyond his control. Here "causality" is read into the determinism of caste-*dharma*. This conclusion, so suggestive to the Samkhya in consequence of the purely material-mechanical nature of all components of action, has not usually been drawn even there. Furthermore, and theoretically this is the main argument, what is not really there one cannot really fight. This has the ring of the Vedanta illusion, in accordance, however, with the Samkhya interpretation maintaining that only the knowing mind "exists," all action and fighting adheres only to matter. For the sake of salvation, the spirit must emancipate itself from its entanglement in the affairs of matter.

The argument would seem to be weaker than when it was advanced from the standpoint of Samkhya thought, for it holds discerning "knowledge" to be precisely what works. Once the

passive, life-suffering spirit comes to see clearly and definitely that it does not act but merely endures the action of matter it is no longer enmeshed by the *karma* mechanism of merit and default of matter. Like the classical Yogin, the devout person becomes the observer of his own action and of all psychic processes in his own consciousness and thereby emancipated from the world.⁴⁷

However, the question remains: why then should Arjuna fight at all? This follows, in correct Hindu fashion, positively out of the warrior's caste *dharma* to which Krishna calls attention.⁴⁸ In the eyes of the warrior the fight is good; in one phrase still characteristic of epic times Krishna says "righteous" war.⁴⁸ To avoid battle is shameful. Whoever falls in battle goes to Heaven. Who conquers there rules the earth. Both things, Krishna opines, must be equally valid for the warrior. But this could hardly be the last word.

The very question is whether and in what sense action according to caste *dharma*, hence an act of matter and not of the salvation-seeking spirit, could have holy value. Only in answer to this is to be found the religious originality of the conception rendered by the Bhagavadgita. We are familiar with the minimization of entanglement in the world, the religious "incognito" of the mystic which issues from his peculiar way of receiving the holy. The early Christian had his goods and women, "as if he had them not." In the Bhagavadgita this takes on a special coloration, namely, that the man of knowledge proves himself in action better against his own action in the world by consuming what is commanded—that always means caste duty—while inwardly remaining completely detached. That is, he acts as if he acted not. In action this is achieved by performing everything without ever seeking success and giving up all and every wish for the fruits of endeavor. Such desires would lead to entanglement in the world, hence the emergence of *karma*.

As the early Christian "does right and leaves the rest to God" so the worshipper of the Bhagavata does the "necessary work"—we would say he yields to the "demand of the day"⁴⁹—the "obligations established by nature." And indeed, corresponding to the exclusiveness of caste duties, he does these and no others⁵¹ without any concern for the consequences, especially not for personal success.

One cannot dispense with works so long as one has a body

(such works include spiritual functions materially conceived by Samkhya doctrine), but one may well dispense with the fruits of such works.⁵² Asceticism and sacrifice, too, are only valuable for salvation⁵³ when one inwardly renounces their fruits, hence when, as we would say, practicing them "for their own sake." Whoever in action gives up the desire for the values of the world, "does not through his action burden himself with guilt, for he acts only for the sake of the body and is content with what offers itself."⁵⁴ Such action remains *karma*-free.

It is evident that Vedanta authors, too, were capable of justifying these teachings in fact. From the standpoint of Vedanta, action in the world of illusory reality involves a weaving of the treacherous threads of the veil of *maya* behind which the godly All One is concealed. Whoever has once raised the veil and knows himself to be at one with Brahma can continue to take part in the illusory action without endangering his salvation. Knowledge, however, has protected him from the entanglements of *karma* and ritual duties supply the rules by which one can protect one's self from behavior offensive to the gods.

If this world-indifference precisely to inner-worldly conduct in a certain sense represents the crown of classical ethics of Indian intellectuals, the poem itself reveals the struggle by which this ethic gradually assumed its final form. In the first place there are discernible traces of the struggle against ancient ritualistic Brahmanhood. The Veda teachings are informed by the desire for happiness. It concerns the *gunas*, the material world and its coveted fruits.⁵⁵ There remained the further problem of the relative significance of action in agreement with the holy teaching, that is to say of action disregarding results, thus *karma*-free action in the world over and against the classical redemptory means of contemplation. Thus the question involves the position of inner-worldly to world-fleeing mysticism. In one place⁵⁶ it is said that action is better than the mere shunning of action.

The derivation of the Bhagavata religiosity from the Kshatriya ethic makes it probable that it is older than the official ethic which, in reverse gives a higher place to meditation as the business of charismatic saints. However, both holy paths are acknowledged to be correct: *jnanayga* (right knowledge) and *karmayoga* (right action), each corresponding to the respective caste *dharma* are ordered alongside one another. Also in the education of the cultured laity the place of methodical contem-

plation as the classical path to gnosis was no longer to be shaken. The derivation from the stratum of cultured intellectuals is clear throughout. This is obvious in the absolute rejection of orgiastic ecstacy and all active asceticism. In the Bhagavadgita, senseless asceticism full of desire, passion, and defiance is of daemonic character⁵⁷ and leads to ruin. Over and against that, the intimate relation of Bhagavata piety to classical Yoga is quite obvious and fully in agreement with the Samkhya dualism of known spirit and known content of consciousness evinced in numerous passages of the poem.

The Yogin is more than an ascetic and—characteristic of the original attitude of classical Brahmanical teaching—also more than a “knower.”⁵⁸ Yoga technique, the regulation of breath and perception are extolled.⁵⁹ General Hindu principles find their correspondence in the commandments of world indifference: the avoidance of lust, rage, and greed as the three gates to hell,⁶⁰ the inner emancipation from attachment to home, wife, and children,⁶¹ and absolute *ataxia*⁶² are here again bidden to the redeemed. The statement that who knows spirit and matter will not be reborn “no matter how he has conducted his life”⁶³ is opposed at least to the classical principles of Yoga and is also non-Vedantic, representing, rather, an extreme Samkhya formula. The anomie consequence which we have come to know in classical Hinduism, in the last analysis, as resulting from the position of the redeemed believer (*jivanmukti*), in the Bhagavata religion, however, was brought into relation to a theme we have not previously encountered, and one which also actually represents an alien element in classical teaching. “Lay down all duties in me, your refuge,” Krishna says occasionally.⁶⁴ Even a miscreant who truly loves Krishna became holy.⁶⁵ Dying with the syllable “Om” on one’s lips and in thought of Krishna gives assurance against ruin in the future life.⁶⁶ The doctrine that inner-worldly action be not unholy but has, indeed, holy value when performed with absolute indifference to the world, thus proves the mystical state of grace of the spiritual Ego precisely against what appears to be one’s own external and internal conduct and behavior as conditioned by entanglement in the material world. This doctrine easily harmonizes with the general presuppositions of early Hindu salvation conceptions and is found with the positive interpretation that action in the world is only of redemptory value if performed without attachment

to the fruits of action and oriented toward Krishna alone, for his sake and in thought of him.

Here a type of religion of "faith" emerges. For "faith" in the typically religious sense does not necessarily intend facts and teachings to be true—such belief in dogmas can only be fruit and symptom of the actual religious sense. A religion of faith implies the religious devotion, the unconditional trust and obedience and the orientation of one's entire life to a god or redeemer. Krishna here appears as such a redeemer. He dispenses "grace" (*prasada*) to those seeking refuge in him alone. This concept, which except perhaps for weak traces in some of the Upanishads, is lacking in ancient classical Hinduism because it presupposes the super-worldly god and, at bottom, signifies also a disruption of *karma* causality or, at least, of the ancient principle that the soul should alone be responsible for its own peculiar fate. Originally, the concept of dispensing grace per se is not foreign to Hindu religion. The hagiology—worshipping magicians dispensing of grace by virtue of their charisma and the grace of the super-mundane, personalized God or deified hero—suggested itself as the transposition of the human into the divine. However, the thought that salvation from the world be available along this path is a new phenomenon. Yet it does not seem possible to attribute the emergence of this redeemer religiosity and faith to later times—after Buddha, during which time this religion, as will be shown, developed luxuriously. The first inscriptural mention of the Bhagavat religion⁶⁷ would seem to date only from the second century B.C.⁶⁸ However, upon close inspection the Bhagavadgita is uniformly pervaded by this belief, and is obviously understandable only in the paramountcy of just this element even in its origin. Furthermore, it appears so completely as an esoteric teaching of a community of religious virtuosos of high intellectual culture that it must be assumed that this very feature was characteristic of the Bhagavata religion from the beginning.

The impersonality of the godly has been the truly classical conception but presumably it has never consistently been the only one, even among the intellectual strata and the Brahmins. This held least for lay circles, particularly the strongly developed, cultured, but unmilitary citizenry in the time of emergent Buddhism. The *Mahabharata* as a whole, even in its old sections, represents a peculiar mixture of features of an ancient, humanis-

tically intellectualized ethic of proud knights. "This holy secret I inform you; nothing is nobler than being human," says the epic,⁶⁹ with the bourgeois need for assurance in the grace of a God guiding man's fate according to his will and with priestly, mystical indifference to the world. In the Sankhya doctrine, which in its consistent form is atheistic and undoubtedly belongs to the rational religion of intellectuals, Vishnu, as a personal God, occasionally seems to play a somewhat obscure role. Yoga for reasons known to us always adhered firmly to the concept of a personal God. Among the great personalized deities of later Hinduism neither Vishnu nor Shiva were new creations. Shiva was only eliminated by silence in the literature of the ancient Vedic Brahmanhood because of the orgiastic character of the ancient Shiva cults. Later, and until today, precisely the most orthodox, distinguished Brahmanical sects were and are Shivaists; however, they expunged orgiastic elements from the cult. That the individual could find refuge with a redeemer as with a divine incarnation was a concept which was at least current in heterodox soteriology of the intellectuals particularly the Buddhistic from the beginning. It was hardly invented by the Buddhists. In proof we may adduce the position of the magical *guru* which of yore bore this absolutely authoritative and personalized character. What was first lacking in classical Bhagavata religion or, if it already existed, was not taken up by the strata of cultured literati was the ardent love of the redeemer of the later Krishna religion. This may have been similar to Lutheran orthodoxy which rejected the psychological identical pietistic love of Christ (Zinzendorf) as an unclassical innovation.

The Bhagavata religion also preserved its character as religion of intellectuals in its unconditional retention of gnosis, hence of the holy aristocracy of knowledge. Only the wise were holy. Indeed it carried these conceptions to their logical conclusion by relativizing the paths of salvation along organic status-group lines. All honestly and zealously pursued holy paths lead also to the goal, namely, the particular goal sought by the aspirant. One should not disturb the ignorant "who are attracted to action," that is to say, who never free themselves from striving for the fruits of action and do not attain world-indifference to things worldly. The knowing man, indeed, acts in an elevated state (Yoga) of indifference to the world, but he calls the work of the ignorant "good."⁷⁰ This is quite similar to the Chinese

mystics who leave the masses with their material pleasures and personally strive for Tao. The reason is the same in both cases, namely that people vary in receptivity to religious experience, as every virtuoso knows.

The knower of the Vedas, the soma-drinking (the ritualistic Brahmins) go into the Heaven of Indra⁷⁰ with eternal gladness. To envision Krishna is, of course, not possible either through Vedic knowledge or through ascetic penance. And it is indeed difficult⁷¹ to achieve Krishna as the Vedantists wished, directly through striving for unity with the Brahman. Krishna has power to grant attainment of that final holiness which the sincere worshippers cherish though enticed through desire—that is to say, by attachment to the beauty of the world—they are unable to approach him.⁷²

Decisive for salvation is “constancy” in the state of grace. To be “immutable” (*avijahicarin*) to have the *certitudo salutis* is all important. Then the individual will think of Krishna in the hour of death and reach him. This grace he grants to those who act rightly, that is to say, according to *dharma*, without regard to results and without personal interest in their acts. As regards one’s own situation, speaking in occidental terms, he must have only the Fichtean “cold approval” of his rightful actions as measured by *dharma*. Then the individual is truly indifferent to the world, hence emancipated from it and *karma*-free.

What strikes the occidental about the redeemer Krishna, and what separates him from later redeemers who are presented as free of sin in the theology of the sects is Krishna’s indubitable nonvirtuousness. In the Mahabharata he suggests to his protégés the grossest and most unchivalrous offenses against the mores. This is indicative of the relatively great age of the heroic epic, rather than astral, sun-god derivation of Krishna. His features bear the stamp by the old heroic ethos so basically that it could not be eliminated by retouching. Holy teaching accommodated itself to this fact by declaring, on the one hand, that words not acts are the one essential thing and, on the other, by interpreting indifference to the world to mean also that what happens is presumably decreed by fate (in orthodox conceptions, finally through *karma*) and it holds, at least for a god, no matter how it came about.

The inner-worldly ethic of the Bhagavadgita is “organismic” in a sense hardly to be surpassed. Indian “tolerance” rests upon

this absolute relativizing of all ethical and soteriological commandments. They are organically relativized not only according to caste membership, but also according to the goal or end sought by the individual. It is no more a matter of negative tolerance but: (1) of positive—only relative and graded—appreciation for quite contrary maxims of action; (2) of the recognition of the lawful and ethical autonomy, the equal and independent value, of the various spheres of life which had to result from their equal devaluation as soon as ultimate questions of salvation were at stake. That this universal organic relativism was no mere theory but penetrated deeply into emotional life can be seen from the documents which Hinduism has preserved from the time of its rule. In the so-called “Kanausa-Verse-Inscription” of the Brahman Sivagana,⁷³ for example, Sivagana donates two villages in support of a hermitage built by him. He had through his power of prayer helped his king to conquer innumerable enemies and to butcher them. In these verses, as usual, the earth is soaked with blood. Then, however, “devoutly” he built this house and whoever in the world turns his eyes to it will be freed from the imperfections of the “Kali Age.” He did this because he found that life is burdened with every sort of suffering, with aging, separation, and death and that this manner of using riches is the only good one known to all good people of the world. “He built it,” the following verses continue, “in the season in which the wind bears the scent of the Acoka—blossoms and the mango shoots are sprouting. Swarms of bumble bees are everywhere and more than ever the gleam in the eyes of lovely women tells of their love. The sign which love impressed upon their round bosom is revealed and their bodies shatter the bodice when they are stirred sitting on swings face to face with their lovers. Laughingly they hastily avert their half-closed eyes and only the quiver of their brows betrays the joy in their hearts. The wives of the pilgrims, however, see the land lighted with the flowers of Mango trees and hear the humming sound of drunken bees. And tears come to their eyes.”⁷⁴ There follows the listing of contributions for incense and other needs of the hermitage and their reimbursement.

One sees that here everything in life receives its due: the wild battle fury of the hero, then the yearning for salvation, for the ever-new pains of separation composing life, the place of solitude for meditation, and, again, the radiant beauty of spring and the

happiness of love. In the end, all this is immersed in a melancholy dream-mood pervaded by resignation which the idea of the maya-veil must produce and into which finally everything is woven, the unreal and passing beauty like the horror of the struggle of man against man. In an official monumental inscription⁷⁰ is set forth the attitude toward the world which, in the last analysis, also pervades the most characteristic parts of Indian literature. Reality and magic, action, reasoning and mood, dreamy gnosis and sharp conscious feelings are found with and within one another, because ultimately all remains equally unreal and unsubstantial against the sole reality of divine being.

CHAPTER VI

THE HETERODOX SOTERIOLOGIES OF THE CULTURED PROFESSIONAL MONKS

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1. *The Two Great Heterodoxies*

WITH A universalism based on the religious depreciation of the world and an organic relativism of "world affirmation," we find ourselves on the true grounds of the classical viewpoint of the Indian literati as created by the intelligence during the ancient epoch of nobles and petty princes. However, there appear two other forms of religion as well. First, there always existed that massive popular orgiasticism against which the intellectuals had closed the door and which they detested and scorned as a *pudendum* or which they ignored as they have done as far as possible into the present. Alcoholic, sexual, and meat orgies, magical compulsion of the spirit, personal deities, living and apotheosized saviors, ardent cultist love of personalized helpers-in-need, conceived as incarnations of great merciful gods—all these were familiar elements of popular religiosity.

We saw that Bhagavata religion, although in structure still native to the cultured stratum, nevertheless made extensive concessions to the redemption belief of the laity with its need for grace and help in distress. We shall see later how under quite changed power relations, the ruling intellectual stratum found itself compelled to arrange for much broader compromises with plebeian forms of piety which were the sources of the specifically unclassical Hindu sects. Located on this base were the Vishnu and Shiva religions of the Indian Middle Ages and modern times.

However, before turning to these it is first necessary to examine two other religious movements which in all essentials had grown on the soil of the ancient intellectual stratum, but which

were regarded by the Brahmins not only as unclassical, but were fought, cursed, and hated as most base and objectionable heresies. It was said that it is better to meet a tiger than one of these heretics, because the tiger only destroys the body, but they destroy the soul. The two forms of belief are historically important because they succeeded for several centuries in winning recognition as the dominant competitors of Hinduism. Buddhism diffused to all areas of India; Jainism to considerable portions of India.

This was only transitory. Although Buddhism later completely disappeared from India, it developed into a world religion which partly exerted a culturally revolutionizing influence from Ceylon and India across Tibet to Siberia including China, Korea, and Japan. Jainism remained essentially restricted to classical Indian territory and shriveled to what today is a numerically small sect which often is claimed by the Hindus as belonging to their community. In our context Jainism is of some interest due to the fact that it is a specifically merchant sect as exclusive, or even more exclusive, than the Jews were in the Occident. Thus we here meet apparently with a positive relationship of a confession to economic motivation which is otherwise quite foreign in Hinduism. Of the two confessions which were in sharpest competition with one another and which emerged in classical Kshatriya times (in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.), Jainism¹ is the older and more exclusively Indian and for reason of expedient presentation shall be discussed first.

2. Jainism

LIKE numerous other holy teachers of classical times, according to tradition the author of Jain asceticism Inatiputra (Nataputta), named Mahavira (died around 600 B.C.) was a Kshatriya noble. The origin of the sect within the sphere of the ancient distinguished intelligentsia is still expressed in the assurance of the transmitted biography,² that *arhats* (holy men) always stem from a royal family of pure lineage and never from lower families.³ This is already expressive of a sharp opposition to Vedic-Brahmanical education on the part of the *sramana*, who originated in lay circles. The ritualistic commandments and teachings of the Vedas as well as the holy language are emphatically rejected. They have not the slightest significance for

salvation which depends solely on the asceticism of the individual. The teaching rests solidly on the general presupposition that salvation consists of freedom from the wheel of rebirth attainable only by detachment from this world of imperfection, from inner-worldly action, and from *karma* attached to action.

In contrast to Buddhism, Jainism accepted the essentials of the classical *atman* doctrine.⁴ Like ancient Samkhya, however, it bypassed the Brahman doctrine, the concept of the divine soul of the universe. It was heterodox particularly because of its rejection of Veda education, of rituals, and of the Brahmins. The absolute atheism of the doctrine, the rejection of any supreme deity and of the total Hindu pantheon would have been no absolutely compelling reason for the charge of heterodoxy, since other ancient philosophies of the intellectuals, particularly the Samkhya doctrine, were of the same bent.

Certainly Jainism rejected all orthodox philosophies, not only the Vedantic but also the Samkhya doctrine. Yet it was close to the last in certain metaphysical presuppositions. This holds especially for its view of the nature of the soul. All souls, i.e., the actual, ultimate I-substances of the Ego, are alleged to be equal and eternal essences. These and only these, not an absolute divine soul are *jiva*, the carriers of life. And indeed they are (in sharpest contrast to Buddhist teaching) a kind of soul-monad which is capable of infinite wisdom (gnosis). The soul is no mere passive, receptive spirit as in the case of orthodox Bhagavata religion, but, corresponding to a far more strongly accentuated interrelation with the ancient active asceticism and self-deification, the soul represents an active principle of life to which the inertia of matter is opposed as a contrast (*ajiva*).

The body of such is evil. Within Jainism the interrelation with mortificatory magic remains close within the qualitative limits established through its intellectualistic anti-orgiastic origin. The tie was closer than in any other salvation religion of India. An expression of this is the fact that Jainism in place of the world of completely dethroned deities gives divine honors to great virtuosi of asceticism: The *arhat*, the *jina*, and, as supreme, the *tirthankara*. They are worshipped during their lifetimes as magicians and after death as exemplary helpers in virtue.⁶ From a total of twenty-five tirthankars, Parsvanatha (allegedly in the ninth century B.C.) was, according to the legend, the next to the last. Mahavira, however, was the last. With them the "prophetic

age" came to a close. After them no one has attained the stage of omniscience or the penultimate stage (*manahparyaya*).

As the quality of Brahmanical gnosis increases by steps, so Jain charisina is graded, according to the Kalpa Sutra⁷ into seven statuses according to the stages of knowledge: from knowledge of the writings and holy traditions to the stage of enlightenment concerning the things of this world (*avadhi*), the first stage of supernatural knowledge; then the ability to have visions (*Hellschens*); then to the possession of magical powers and the ability of self-transformation; then (fifth step) to knowledge of the thoughts of all living beings (*manahparyaya*, the second stage of supernatural wisdom); and freedom from all suffering (sixth step); and, therewith, finally, (seventh step) to certainty of the "last birth." Therefore, says the Acharanga Sutra⁸, the soul of the perfectly redeemed is qualityless, bodyless, soundless, colorless, tasteless, without feeling, without resurrection, without contact with matter, knowing and perceiving "without analogy," hence directly and without imagery thus leading an "unconditional" existence.

Whoever in life has attained the proper intuitive knowledge sins no more. He sees, like Mahavira, all deities at his feet, and is all-knowing. Mahavira is the (earthly) final state which the perfect ascetic enters and is also⁹ called *nirvana* (in this case identical with the later *jivan mukti*). This state of Jainistic *nirvana* means, however—as Hopkins has correctly seen—in contrast to Buddhist *nirvana* not salvation from "existence" in general, but, "salvation from the body," the source of all sin and lust and of all limitation of spiritual power. One may clearly discern in this the historical relation to miraculous magic. For the Jains, too, knowledge is the supreme, in fact magical means of salvation, as with all classical soteriologies. However, the path to this, in addition to study and meditation, is asceticism to a higher degree than was the case with other sects of literati.

Indeed, with the Jains asceticism has been pushed to an extreme point. He achieves supreme holiness who starves himself to death.¹⁰ On the whole, however, this asceticism, as compared to the primitive asceticism of magicians, is spiritualized in the direction of "world renunciation." "Homelessness" is the basic holy concept. It signifies the break of all worldly relations, thus, above all, indifference to all sense perceptions and avoidance of all action based on worldly motives.¹¹ It aims at seeking to cease

